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Albright, portrait of the week by Bahgory 8

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Envoy change

US SECRETARY of State Madeleine Albright has recommended that the current US ambassador to Egypt, Edward Walker, be appointed as Washington's envoy to Israel.

Walker would succeed Martin Indyk, who is waiting for Senate confirmation of his appointment as assistant secretary of state for Near Eastern affairs, AFP reported on Tuesday.

According to *US News and World Report*, Albright made her choice for the ambassadorial post to pre-empt a possible White House push for its own political favourite. Albright is expected to make her visit to the Middle East in September but no fixed date has been yet set.

Night of hell

IN ONE of the bloodiest weeks of Algeria's long-running Islamist insurgency, armed groups massacred at least eight more people in three separate attacks on Tuesday night bringing the death toll to 200 since Sunday.

AFP quoted Algerian newspaper reports of a massacre in Zahara, in western Algeria, in which a family of six were killed. Two others were killed in bomb attacks south of the capital Algiers.

Traces of blood still marked parts of Beni Ali village as survivors told of a night of hell when 64 villagers were massacred and their severed heads put outside their doors by suspected Islamist militants.

A government spokesman warned Algerians to be more vigilant in the face of continued bloodshed that has claimed 60,000 lives in the last five years.

Gulf alert

THE US Embassy in Kuwait yesterday told American citizens residing in the Gulf state to exercise particular caution and maintain heightened awareness of their surroundings in the next few days.

The warning, The Associated Press said, followed a report received by the embassy in an anonymous phone call claiming knowledge of a possible attack against an American location in Kuwait on 28 August. A similar threat was made against US concerns last October.

Security around US embassies in the Gulf area has been boosted since the bombing of a housing complex in Al-Khobar in neighbouring Saudi Arabia in June 1996.

MA exile

ISRAEL has agreed to free a Palestinian writer after detaining him for 20 months without filing charges, drawing criticism from Israeli human rights groups such as Betselem.

Under an unusual arrangement, 35-year-old Emad Sabi will be driven today from his prison cell to the airport for temporary exile in the Netherlands, where he will study for a master's degree in economics at the Institute for Social Studies in The Hague. Sabi had applied for a scholarship before his detention in December 1995. He has agreed to refrain from activities that "endanger Israeli security".

Sabi's release comes just before the Supreme Court was due to hear his appeal. Sabi was detained on suspicion of being a leading figure in the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine that opposes the Oslo Accords. Betselem was quoted in an AP report as saying that 367 Palestinians are still in Israeli administrative detention, some of them for three years or more, without being prosecuted.

'Seger, seger'

ISRAEL agreed yesterday to lift a four-week closure of the Biblical West Bank town of Bethlehem, a senior Palestinian security official said.

The head of Palestinian security liaison in Bethlehem, Gen. Ziyad Al-Atrash, said he was informed by the Israeli army that the blockade, imposed after the 30 July double suicide bombing in Jerusalem, would be ended Wednesday afternoon.

There was no immediate confirmation from the Israeli army.

Bethlehem has been the scene of daily protests against the travel ban. Israeli troops yesterday shoved back dozens of Palestinian legislators and clerics who tried to break through an Israeli army roadblock.

The siege has also drawn international criticism, especially from Christian groups. The Vatican's envoy to Israel called the Israeli Foreign Ministry earlier this week to express concern that many pilgrims were not allowed to visit the birthplace of Jesus Christ.

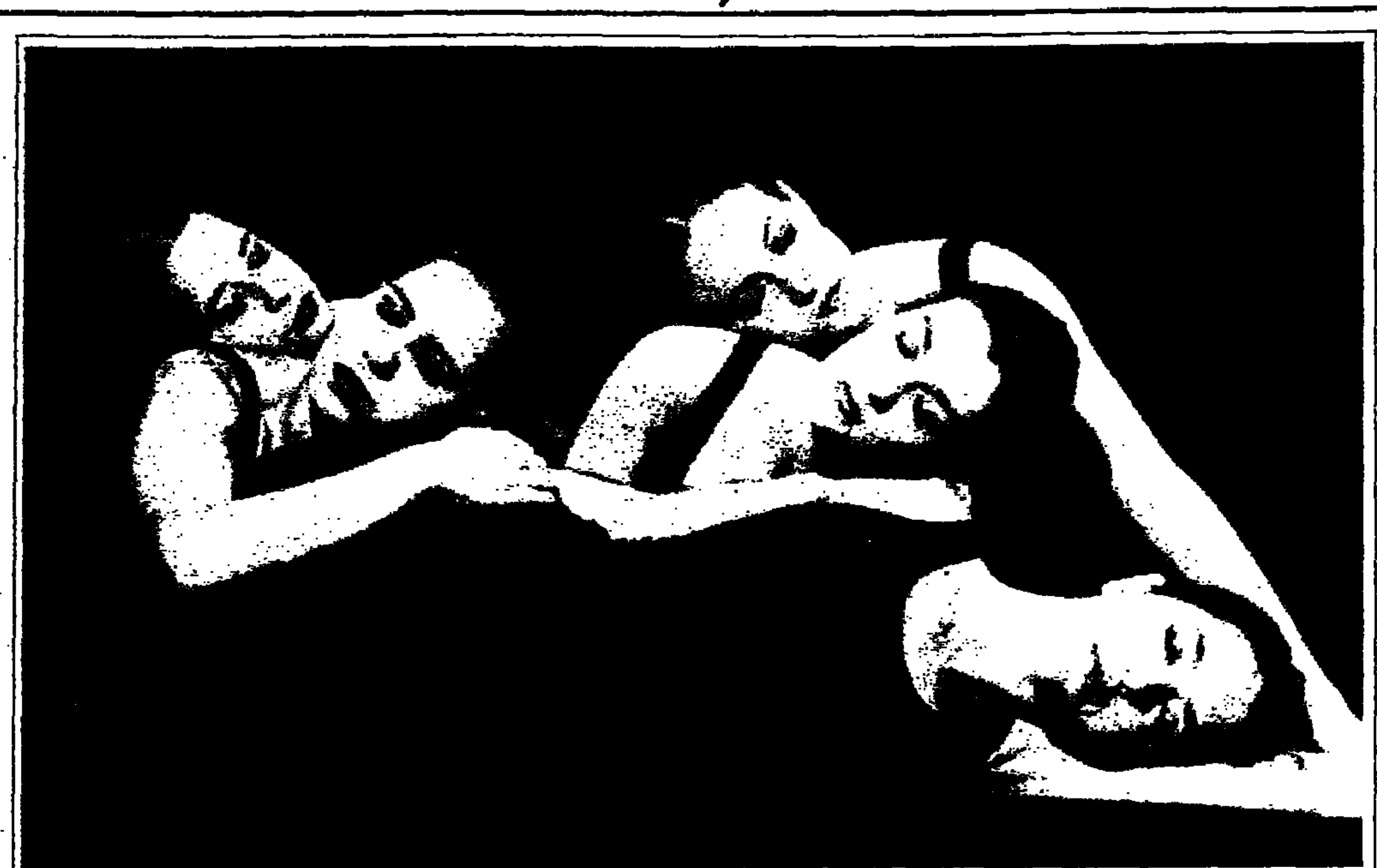
Bethlehem has been hardest hit by Israel's closure of the West Bank and Gaza Strip, imposed after the Jerusalem bombings. The closure bars Palestinian workers from travelling to their jobs inside Israel. In addition, the residents of Bethlehem have been prevented from leaving their town, and many tourists cannot enter.

Israel reportedly believes that two leaders of the Islamist militant group Hamas suspected to be masterminds of the Jerusalem bombings are hiding in the city.

Before the announcement was made, some 50 Palestinian legislators and clergymen from Jerusalem arrived at an Israeli army checkpoint on the northern end of Bethlehem and began walking toward the city. Simultaneously, the Bethlehem mayor led a group of protesters from the city to the checkpoint.

Dozens of Israeli police and soldiers blocked the marchers and pushed them back. "Why don't you let me go to be with my brothers on the other side?" shouted Bethlehem Mayor Hassan Nasser. The soldiers yelled back "seger, seger," the Hebrew word for closure.

The two groups eventually met astride the barricade, and briefly shook hands, but were then pushed back by Israeli troops who had formed a cordon.



Approximately 45 companies from nearly 40 countries will be performing at the Ninth Cairo International Festival for Experimental Theatre(1-11 September). Above, one of the Egyptian entries: Karim El-Tonsi's dance-theatre production *The Other Side of Silence*

Reaching out to Africa

Egypt's top diplomat is touring southern Africa to promote economic ties and further cement the already close political relations. **Nevine Khalil** writes

Although the thrust of Foreign Minister Amr Moussa's six-nation tour in southern Africa was primarily economic, judging by the 33 businessmen who accompanied him, his talks with the various monarchs and presidents also dealt with political issues. Standing issues of immediate concern to African countries are the expansion of the UN Security Council, enhancing the Organisation of African Unity's (OAU) role in conflict resolution, reviving the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) and the creation of an African economic community. The Middle East peace process was also on Moussa's political agenda, a matter on which most Arab and African countries see eye-to-eye.

The tour includes Lesotho, South Africa, Mozambique, Zambia, Malawi and Botswana.

Two joint statements issued with Lesotho and South Africa at the end of Moussa's visits to the two countries criticised Israel's peace policies and demanded that Israel cease settlement building in Palestinian territories. Both statements said that Israel must "refrain from taking any measures, particularly in Jerusalem, which predetermine the permanent status talks."

Another issue of importance to Cairo is South African President Nelson Mandela's attempt to mediate between the Khartoum government and the opposition Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA), led by John Garang, in south Sudan. During their meeting on Tuesday, Moussa and Mandela discussed the situation in Sudan and Pretoria's conciliation efforts. "I believe Mr Mandela is in a good position to lend his prestige and authority to the efforts of conciliation in order to lessen the tensions in Sudan," Moussa said. He asserted that Egypt's position was to support "the territorial integrity of Sudan", warning that "anything that will affect the unity of Sudan will open a Pandora's box in Africa".

A meeting between Mandela and SPLA leader Garang scheduled for Tuesday was postponed until today for logistical reasons. Moreover, a two-day summit, expected on Sunday, will bring together Mandela, Garang, Sudanese President Omar Al-Bashir, Zimbabwe's President Robert Mugabe, who is the current president of the OAU, and Ugandan leader Yoweri Museveni.

As Moussa began his Africa tour, he came under fire from Sudanese officials who claimed that he was trying to undermine Mandela's initiative. The Sudanese Minister for Federal Relations, Ali Al-Hagg, said that every time Al-Bashir's "motorcade lands in any country, Egyptian diplomacy hurries to block Sudan's efforts". He claimed that on several occasions Cairo unsuccessfully attempted to contain Khartoum at international forums.

Egyptian diplomats in Cairo brushed aside the statements, saying that Khartoum is in the habit of blaming Cairo for its failure to "improve its image abroad".

Moussa began his tour on Saturday, describing southern Africa as "the most successful common African market with the highest individual and national income on the continent". Arriving in Masero, capital of Lesotho, he met with his counterpart, Kelebone Albert Maope and Prime Minister Ntsu Mokhehle. During his discussions with King Letsie III of Lesotho, Moussa delivered a message from President Hosni Mubarak to the monarch, and expressed Egypt's gratitude for Lesotho's support of Egyptian attempts to join the Community of Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA).

The joint statement said the two foreign ministers agreed on the need for expanding the membership of the Security Council. They also emphasised the need to end the conflicts in Somalia, Sierra Leone, Angola and Congo Brazzaville through peaceful means. In this regard, the statement said, Moussa and Maope "agreed on the importance of enhancing the OAU's abilities in conflict prevention through strengthening its mechanism for conflict prevention, management and resolution".

In another joint statement issued on Tuesday, Moussa and his South African counterpart Alfred Nzo expressed satisfaction with the progress made in resolving the conflict in Democratic Congo, formerly Zaire, and called on other parties in Africa to resolve their differences peacefully. Moussa acknowledged in particular South Africa's efforts to achieve a bloodless transfer of power in former Zaire, and its support for the admission of Egypt to the COMESA.

Egypt and South Africa also supported the idea of expanding permanent membership of the Security Council to include an African seat as well as seats for other continents. Moussa denied that Cairo and Pretoria were competing over the Africa seat, declaring that both countries are committed to an OAU resolution that the seat should be held by rotation.

A meeting of the Joint Egyptian-South African Committee resulted in the signing of five bilateral agreements in the fields of civil aviation, tourism, preventing double taxation, science and technology, as well as arts and culture. A proposed agreement on investments, mainly by private entrepreneurs, is expected to be signed soon.

Trade between Egypt and South Africa has increased from $13 million in 1994, when relations between the two countries were first established, to $88 million in 1996. Trade between Egypt and the rest of Africa jumped 302 per cent between 1990 and 1996 to $208 million a year.

Ceasefire in the balance

An obviously divided militant Islamist leadership continues to send contradictory messages: armed attacks in Upper Egypt and more ceasefire appeals in Cairo. **Khaled Dawoud** investigates

Egypt's largest Islamist militant organisation, Al-Gama'a Al-Islamiya issued a statement on Friday confirming responsibility for the latest terrorist attack at the town of Manfalout in Assiut province in which five policemen and a civilian were killed. Eight others were wounded when unidentified gunmen ambushed two police vehicles, spraying their occupants with automatic rifle fire.

The surprise attack came at a time when Islamist lawyers and other moderate Islamist figures were intensifying their efforts to persuade the government to consider seriously a cease-fire appeal made nearly two months ago by imprisoned leaders of the Gama'a.

At the opening of a military trial of 98 suspected Gama'a members on 5 July, one of the defendants said that six prominent Gama'a leaders serving life terms for their roles in the assassination of the late President Anwar El-Sadat in 1981 were calling upon their followers to unconditionally stop anti-government attacks inside and outside Egypt. The offer was immediately spurned by Interior Minister Hassan El-Alfi who described it as a "manoeuvre" at a time when police were winning the battle against militant groups.

Meanwhile, the Gama'a leaders who had managed to escape from Egypt and are now reportedly living in Afghanistan, Pakistan and some European countries, opposed the unconditional offer to stop anti-government violence. In three statements issued since the 5 July appeal, including the one issued after the Manfalout attack a week ago, the expatriate Gama'a leaders said they would continue their five-year-old campaign of violence to overthrow the government until thousands of militants were released from prison. They also asked the government to stop putting suspected militants on trial before military courts and to enforce strict Islamic laws.

And yet, the reported divisions between imprisoned Gama'a leaders and those living in exile did not prevent Islamist lawyer Montasser El-Zayyat from continuing his efforts to mobilise support for the appeal to stop violence.

Before the Manfalout attack, several other imprisoned leaders of the Gama'a as well as the Jihad group declared support for the cease-fire appeal, which gained additional momentum when the Gama'a's spiritual leader, Sheikh Omar Abdel-Rahman, gave it his blessings. Abdel-Rahman is now serving a life term in New York after being convicted of ordering the 1993 World Trade Centre bombing. He issued a statement from prison, through his American lawyer, endorsing the appeal to stop anti-government violence.

For its part, the Interior Ministry seemed to slightly change the tone of its reaction to the cease-fire offer. Interior Minister Alfi said he would welcome any effort that would bring stability and more investors to Egypt, but, in the same breath, he affirmed that the government would strongly confront any attempt to use violence to reach political goals.

Thus, when a suspect and possibly false statement was issued last week in the name of the Gama'a claiming responsibility for a fire that gutted the Horreya Shopping Centre in Heliopolis, both the Interior Ministry and Zayyat were quick to question its authenticity.

Following the Manfalout attack, however, Zayyat had no alternative but to acknowledge the divisions within Gama'a ranks. He blamed part of the confusion on what he described as a lack of communication with fugitive Gama'a militants, reportedly hiding in sugarcane fields, tunnels and mountains in southern Egypt.

"It is possible that violations of the imprisoned leaders' initiative take place, and it is also possible that the response will not be complete. The difficulty in communicating with elements at large prevents us from conveying the decision of the leaders. But what is important is that the effort should continue in order to persuade all parties to stop violence," Zayyat said.

Zayyat, according to sources close to the Gama'a, is trying to widen the base of support for the ceasefire among the group's membership as well as to gain a positive gesture from the government to strengthen his case in contacts with the expatriate Gama'a leaders.

In this respect, Zayyat, together with a group of moderate Islamist figures, is urging opposition party leaders to sign an appeal calling upon the government to consider the militants' initiative.

But at least one opposition party, the leftist Tagammu, has expressed firm opposition to a conciliatory response to the ceasefire appeal. Tagammu Secretary-General Rifaat El-Said, noting that none of the ceasefire appeals issued by Gama'a leaders had renounced violence or expressed the group's readiness to surrender their weapons, questioned the group's true motives. "This is a defeated army calling for a truce," he said.



Helping break the siege

Arab countries have decided to pitch in to help the beleaguered Palestinians suffering from an Israeli-imposed economic blockade for nearly a month. Nevine Khalil reports on a Mubarak-Arafat meeting in Alexandria

The Palestinian Authority is to receive aid from four Arab countries, in addition to Egypt, in order to improve the living conditions of Palestinians under economic siege since two bombs exploded in Jerusalem on 30 July. The announcement came during Palestinian President Yasser Arafat's 24-hour visit to Egypt on Monday. He said Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Morocco and Algeria will pump financial aid, the amount of which he did not specify, into the besieged Palestinian territories, after Israel closed the Gaza Strip and West Bank and withheld tax revenues due to the Palestinian Authority.

During his visit, Arafat held extensive talks with President Hosni Mubarak in Alexandria and top presidential adviser Osama El-Baz in Cairo. Over two hours with the president, Arafat discussed the economic blockade imposed by the Israelis, which Palestinian ambassador to Cairo Zohdi Al-Qedra described as "the worst form of terrorism," adding that it "raises tension in the region".

Mubarak decided last week to grant $10 million in aid to the Palestinians, plus 350 tons of flour, sugar and rice which are also on the way. Arafat thanked the Arab leaders for their "honourable stand with the Palestinian people during the current crisis". Arafat, who had called for an emergency Arab summit to deal with the intransigence of the Israeli government, said the response to his call so far was "adequate", and expressed the hope that the summit would take place soon.

After a telephone conversation on Saturday, Mubarak and Arafat conferred in Alexandria on ways of removing the obstacles facing the peace process "in light of the challenges posed by Israeli actions against the Palestinian people, especially the blockade of Bethlehem and the isolation of Jerusalem," said Arafat before leaving Cairo on Tuesday morning. He described Israel's actions as "an indicator of its negative attitude towards the peace process."

Mubarak spoke with Israeli Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu by telephone on Friday to discuss the "danger" facing the peace process, stressing the need for all parties to respect their mutual commitments. Netanyahu wants Arafat to crack down on armed Palestinian militant groups as a prerequisite for the resumption of negotiations, which broke down in March when Israel began building a new Jewish quarter in Arab East Jerusalem. Resumption of talks was further delayed after the 30 July double suicide bombings in Jerusalem. Arafat, who says Netanyahu is using the bombings to destroy the peace process, has refused to make the mass arrests demanded by Israel, spurning them as a "dictate".

During an African tour this week, Egyptian Foreign Minister Amr Moussa said that Netanyahu is seeking to achieve peace on Likud's own terms which would only give the Palestinians a "minimum of their rights".

"Egyptian diplomacy will not support what Netanyahu wants," Moussa said in the South African capital, Pretoria, on Monday. He added, however, that Cairo does not "belittle the importance of security issues for Israel, but the security of others should also be taken into consideration."

Moussa said that this "unprecedented crisis" in the peace process needs "positive intervention" by the US. He praised Washington's recent declarations that the bases for peace should be security for all parties concerned, compliance with the land-for-peace formula, respect for the Oslo Accords and abstention from taking unilateral actions, "which includes settlement building, of course." He described the US approach as a "new and balanced discourse."

The US earlier this month sent its special Middle East envoy Dennis Ross to the region to revive security coordination between Israel and the Palestinians as a prelude to resuming the peace talks. US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright is expected in the region next month, although Washington has not committed itself to a date until it feels agreement is in the offing.

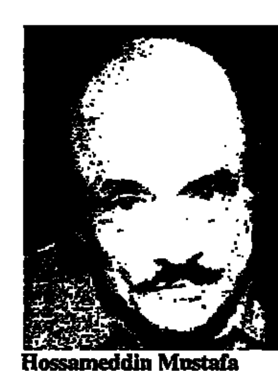
Zakaria Ismail, assistant secretary-general at the Arab League, said that Albright "should come to the region willing to undertake intensive action to put the peace process back on track according to the principles of Madrid and the land-for-peace formula." He said that if the US administration wants "real peace", it should stand up to Israel's intransigence and put responsibility for the deteriorating peace "on the shoulders of Israel."

Some Palestinians have called on Arafat to freeze the Oslo agreements with Israel, and thereby negate the peace process, but he has refused. "Oslo is not a unilateral Palestinian agreement for me to freeze," Arafat said in Cairo, "but an international agreement concluded under the auspices of the US and Russia." The US is attending the revived security talks between the Palestinians and Israelis as an observer. "The US is a witness to the talks which so far have had positive results," Arafat said, adding that the Palestinians are willing to cooperate on security issues within the framework of signed agreements and Palestinian law.

President Mubarak held extensive talks with Arafat in Alexandria on Monday

Union ousts normalising director

An artists union has decided to drop the membership of a renowned film director for encouraging cultural normalisation with Israel. As Mona El-Nahhas reports, the decision drew mixed reactions



Hossameddin Mustafa

Cinema director Hossameddin Mustafa has lost his membership of the Union of Cinema Artists as a penalty for visiting Israel and advocating normalisation of relations with it. The decision to expel Mustafa was taken at an emergency meeting last Friday of the General Federation of Artistic Professions Unions, an umbrella for several syndicates, including the Union of Cinema Artists.

A statement issued following the meeting affirmed the Federation's support for the Palestinians' struggle and opposition to normalising relations with Israel as long as it pursues anti-Palestinian policies.

The Federation's chairman, El-Sayed Radi, told *Al Ahram Weekly* that Mustafa had violated a resolution made by the Federation in 1981, banning visits to Israel or dealing with it in any way. In addition to visiting Israel a few months ago, Mustafa, during a Cairo Television appearance, called for cultural and artistic normalisation with Israel. Mustafa also boasted that although he was Egyptian by birth, he was "American by mentality" — a statement which brought him under fire in the local press.

According to Radi, the statement tarnished the image of Egyptian artists and was one of the reasons behind the Federation's expulsion decision. Mustafa was not summoned for questioning by the Federation before his expulsion, Radi said. "His statements during the television interview provided evident proof of his pro-Israeli attitude. So, there was no need for an investigation," Radi added. He said the decision was final and cannot be contested.

Mustafa, who made tens of nationalistic and social films, was quoted on Sunday as saying that the decision muzzled the freedom of expression. Refusing to back down on his beliefs, he said: "My commitment to a just and lasting Arab-Israeli peace is firm and I won't give it up."

Osama Anwar Okasha, a writer of television soap operas, strongly supported the Federation's decision. "Mustafa's expulsion is the least that should be done after he defied the will of intellectuals and provoked the feelings of all Egyptians," Okasha said. "I think it will be better for him to make films in Israel, where he will be welcomed warmly."

Lutfi El-Kholi, a political writer who was summoned for questioning by the Press Syndicate also for visiting Israel, attacked the decision as "illegal." "Those who took the decision should have first read the Union's statutes, which are limited to regulating the professional rights and duties of its members without interfering with their ideologies," El-Kholi said.

He added, "Normalising relations with Israel is strictly a political issue that unions should not meddle with, simply because they are not political parties."

According to El-Kholi, "Everyone has the right to adopt whatever political position he likes. So, Mustafa has to decide for himself whether to go to Israel or not. Nobody has the right to act as his guardian."

Film director Ali Abdel-Khaleq conceded that Mustafa had violated union regulations, yet he said that the expulsion decision was "excessive." "Whether we agree with Mustafa or not, nobody can deny that he is a landmark in the history of film-making. I think the Union of Cinema Artists should have taken into account Mustafa's honourable history, before taking such an unfair decision," Abdel-Khaleq said.

Nader Galal, another cinema director, was angered by the decision. "I was shocked when I heard about Mustafa's expulsion. I really want to know what Mustafa's crime is. Yes, he visited Israel, but all top Egyptian officials do the same. So, are we going to dismiss them from their posts?" Galal wondered.

"The decision is a challenge to the policy of the state which aims at achieving a just and comprehensive peace with Israel," Galal said.

Tenants' revenge?

The new law liberalising land rents is thought to be behind the killing of a wealthy former MP in the southern governorate of Sohag. Gamal Essam El-Din investigates

The murder of Sobhi Suleiman, a former member of the People's Assembly, stabbed last week in his three-storey villa in the town of Maragha in Sohag Governorate, could have been the result of a dispute with tenant farmers over increased land rents, police sources say. Suleiman, a 76-year-old Coptic Catholic who served as an elected MP for 20 consecutive years, was stabbed 12 times in the chest with a kitchen knife as he slept in his bed.

A preliminary police investigation excluded theft as the motive behind the murder, because LE20,000 and a collection of gold jewellery were found undisturbed in the bedroom closet. However, the murderer escaped with six firearms, including a rifle and three pistols. Suleiman had lived alone in the large villa following the death of his wife. His only surviving son, Khalil, lives in another town.

Police are considering the theory that Suleiman could have been killed because of the new law liberalising agricultural land rents, which is due to take full effect in October. The law, passed in 1992, raised land rents from seven to 22 times the value of the land tax and allowed landlords to limit the length of tenancies. It allowed for a five-year grace period, which ends this October. After this date, land rents will be fully liberalised. As a result, as many as 600,000 tenant farmers face the threat of eviction.

As the deadline approached, violent confrontations between tenants and landlords erupted in various parts of the country, leaving 14 people dead and dozens wounded. The governorates of Beni Suef, El-Minya, Fayoum, Assiut and Sohag, all in southern Egypt, saw most of the disturbances.

Police sources said that Suleiman, whose family owns more than 150 feddans of land, had recently been involved in disputes with some of his tenant farmers. While most of them had agreed to sign new rent contracts, four tenant farmers, unable to pay the higher rents, had refused. As a result, Suleiman submitted complaints to police and threatened them with eviction in October.

Police have already arrested a number of tenant farmers, mostly from Maragha's satellite villages, who were in disagreement with Suleiman. He is also said to have been involved in disputes with other tenant farmers renting land he owns near Naga Hammadi and Bahgoura in the neighbouring governorate of Qena.

The possibility that Suleiman was targeted by Islamist militants is considered unlikely. Fikri El-Gazzar, a former member of parliament, told *Al-Ahram Weekly* that being a Copt had not stopped Suleiman from being elected MP for Maragha between 1970 and 1990, despite rampant religious tension. "He was a member of the ruling National Democratic Party (NDP), an enlightened man with an independent character," El-Gazzar said. "Although religious tension was running high in Upper Egypt in the 1970s and '80s, it is quite an achievement that he, a Copt, was always able to win elections over a period of 20 years."

As the area's parliamentary representative, Suleiman repeatedly acted as a peace broker between Islamist groups and the security forces, intervening more than once to secure the release of arrested militants.

He also won popularity for his benevolence, making generous donations for poor Muslims and Christians alike. He made financial contributions to the building or renovation of at least nine mosques and donated LE60,000 towards the construction of an Azharite institute in Maragha.

The fact that two of his sons died in the 1969 war of attrition with Israel and the 1973 War won him added prestige and veneration as "the father of two martyrs and a symbol of religious unity and social peace between Muslims and Christians in Sohag."

Mohamed Hassan Amer, the NDP deputy for Maragha, told the *Weekly* that although police have not been able so far to identify Suleiman's murderer, there is a strong possibility that a number of tenant farmers were behind the killing. "Most tenant farmers around Maragha are passing through hard times. They are poor farmers who live by growing sugar cane and are suffering from a severe cash shortage because the sugar factory to which they supplied their harvest still owes them 25 per cent of the crop's full price. They also owe a staggering amount of debts to the local agricultural development and credit bank," said Amer. The result, he added, is that most of these tenant farmers will not be able to afford the rent hikes expected next October.

El-Gazzar agreed that the agricultural land law could be behind Suleiman's killing. "I strongly believe that the government is shutting its eyes to the real dangers resulting from the implementation of this law," he said. "If the police prove that Suleiman was killed because of differences over this law, it will be definite and ominous proof that there will be a lot more bloodshed before its full implementation in October."

The full liberalisation of land tenancy rents by October also triggered a series of bloody confrontations between tenant farmers and landlords in a number of Nile Delta governorates. In Kafr El-Zayyat, Gharbiya governorate, Yehia Abou Gazia, a large landowner, was arrested by police for hiring a number of thugs to beat tenant farmer Khaled Khaza and evict him from a 5-feddan piece of land he used to rent from him. Abu Gazia is the brother of Ali Abu Gazia, who represents Kafr El-Zayyat on the Shura Council and is chairman of the Federation of Horticultural Crops.

In Harbeet village in Sharqiya Governorate, 25 tenant farmers were taken into custody for 15 days last week for staging an anti-law demonstration. The farmers, who were threatened with eviction by landlords, were accused of resisting the authorities and setting fire to the local agricultural cooperative society. Five farmers were seriously injured and taken to hospital.

In the meantime, leftist opposition parties vowed to continue their struggle to repeal the law or extend the grace period for five more years. Rifaat El-Said, secretary-general of the leftist Tagammu Party, announced that Tagammu, in cooperation with other opposition parties and human rights groups, will organise a rally for tenant farmers protesting the law next week. Tagammu had requested an emergency sitting of the People's Assembly but the request was rejected by Speaker Fathi Sorour.

The Press Syndicate also urged the Prosecutor General to release leftist journalist Hamdein Sabahi, who was arrested two months ago and remanded in custody last week for a further 45 days. Sabahi was arrested together with Mohsen Hashem, who is in charge of farmers' affairs in the Islamist-oriented Labour Party, for allegedly inciting tenant farmers to protest against the agricultural law.

For the government's part, Agriculture Minister Youssef Wali announced in Fayoum this week that the law will be enforced on time. He said that 95 per cent of tenant farmers have been able to conclude new rent contracts with landlords.

Prime Minister Kamal El-Ganzouri, at a cabinet meeting last week, affirmed that the government "will not let down the tenant farmers who could be evicted from their land in October." The government, he said, would provide all evicted farmers with alternative land, whatever their number. He noted, however, that only 10 per cent of tenants have not been able to conclude new contracts with their landlords.

Stub it out!

The Ministry of Health, other government departments and national television have teamed up to launch an anti-smoking campaign. Sherine Nasr reports

"Smoking is a curse... Health is a blessing," runs an announcement repeatedly broadcast by Egyptian National Television this month, spearheading a national anti-smoking campaign. This campaign, launched by the Ministry of Health and other government departments, aims to ban smoking in many public places, to reduce the tar content of cigarettes and possibly to prohibit the sale of cigarettes to under-18s.

Smoking is already banned on public buses, trains and domestic flights, as well as in theatre and cinema auditoriums. The Health Ministry's drive is to widen the ban to include the lounges and cafeterias of cinemas and theatres as well as sporting clubs, government offices and sections of restaurants — a move approved of wholeheartedly by President Hosni Mubarak, himself a non-smoker.

A ministerial decree was issued by Health Minister Ismail Sallam earlier this month ordering the tar content of locally-made cigarettes to be reduced from 20mg to 15mg by June 1998. "It is an attempt on the ministry's part to produce a less dangerous cigarette, if there is such a thing," said Dr Mahmoud Abul-Nasr, first under-secretary at the Ministry of Health.

Despite complaints that Egyptian cigarettes will become more expensive as a result, their tar content is still higher than that of other imported brands, where the tar level is as little as 10 or even 8mg.

Another recommendation made by Sallam is to pass a law prohibiting the sale of cigarettes to under-18s. Studies have shown that the number of young smokers has increased alarmingly. "Almost 40 per cent of males between 15 and 40 are smokers," Abul-Nasr said. "This means poorer health, less productivity and less income for these people." A moderate smoker of local brands is estimated to spend about LE50 per month on the habit.

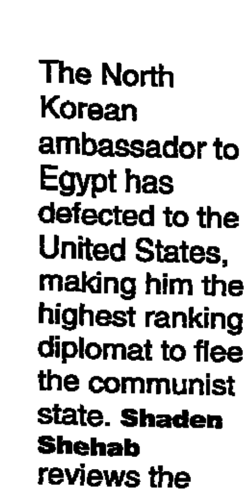
Sallam also recommended that higher taxes be imposed on cigarette production, with the proceeds going towards the medical treatment of smoking-related diseases.

People lighting up in public places, as well as the management of establishments and companies, now run the risk of being punished in accordance with an environment-protection law passed in 1994. "Thanks to the current campaign, the environment law will be more vigorously enforced," said Mohamed El-Guindi, a former attorney-general and one of the law's architects.

According to Article 87 of this law, smoking outside specially-allocated sections in public places is a misdemeanour, punishable by a fine ranging from LE10 to LE50. Management can be fined between LE1,000 and LE2,000. If the act is repeated, the additional penalty of imprisonment, ranging from 24 hours to three years, can be imposed. Government officials, bus drivers and conductors are also subject to administrative penalties, including salary reduction or dismissal in case of repetition.

"The penalties contained in the environment law are harsher than those stipulated by a law for the Prevention of Smoking Dangers passed in 1981, which only imposed a maximum fine of LE20," El-Guindi said.





The North Korean ambassador to Egypt has defected to the United States, making him the highest ranking diplomat to flee the communist state. **Shaden Shehab** reviews the event



The North Korean embassy is under police protection after the ambassador defected to the United States *(photos: Reuters)*

Ambassador skips

The North Korean ambassador to Egypt, Jang Sung-Gil, his wife and two children have defected to the United States. State Department spokesman James Rubin said on Tuesday that the ambassador, his wife, and brother Jang Sung-Ho — economic counsellor at North Korea's general delegation in France — had "sought and been given asylum in the United States". He described the case as the "highest-ranking case of its kind".

On Monday, an Egyptian government source, quoted by the Middle East News Agency, said Jang had sought political asylum at the US Embassy in Cairo. He flew out of Egypt carrying an American travel document and using a different name, said the unnamed source. Jang, who has been serving in Cairo since July 1994, is believed to have information on North Korea's missile exports to the Middle East. He was due to return home at the end of a three-year assignment in Egypt next month.

Quoting diplomatic sources at the North Korean Embassy in Cairo, the agency said Jang will face trial in absentia in North Korea on charges of "escaping" and abandoning his duties.

The ambassador's older brother, his wife, son and daughter, reportedly disappeared from their Paris residence on August 22.

The Cable News Network (CNN) said that the two brothers will be interviewed by US and South Korean officials about North Korea's missile sales to the Middle East.

It was also reported that Seoul will ask Washington for a joint debriefing of the two *diplomats. An unidentified government of*ficial, quoted by the South Korean Yonhap News Agency, said that "we are going to discuss with the US side the issue of having our officials take part in debriefing Ambassador Jang and his family." But State Department spokesman Rubin refused to comment on whether this will be permitted.

Ambassador Jang, 48, his actress wife, Choi Hae Ock, and their two teenage children were last seen in Egypt on Friday. However, the last time the ambassador attended an official function was the previous Tuesday when he signed an economic agreement between North Korea and Egypt.

The Egyptian Foreign Ministry said on Monday that it had been informed by the North Korean Embassy that Jang was missing. The embassy told the ministry that the ambassador left his home in Cairo at noon Friday and had not been seen since, said Said Ragab, the Foreign Ministry's chief of the Asian desk.

Egyptian authorities have searched hospitals and records of airports and ports, but to no avail, Ragab said. "If he has left Egypt, he left under another name," he said.

Earlier on Monday, there were conflicting reports in Cairo on the whereabouts of Jang *and his wife, who allegedly left all their be*longings behind.

Officials at the North Korean embassy in Cairo denied that the ambassador and his wife were seeking asylum or even that they were absent from the Cairo embassy.

The South Korean Yonhap news agency also quoted an embassy official as saying that Jang and his wife were in the North Korean capital Pyongyang and would return to Cairo next week.

Jang's defection is the most significant since February when the North's top ideologue, Hwang Jang-Yop, defected to the South through Beijing.

*The ambassador's 19-year-old son, Chol-*Min, disappeared from Cairo in August of last year. Reports said he fled to Canada after the South Korean Embassy in Cairo responded negatively when he sounded out diplomats about a possible defection to Seoul. The reports said that Seoul was anxious to avoid a diplomatic row with Cairo, which has formal ties with both Koreas.

In 1991 and 1996, two mid-ranking diplomats in Congo and Zambia defected to Seoul separately.

The Korean border is the world's most *heavily armed and defections across it are* rare. More than 150 North Koreans have defected to Seoul in the past three years but most defectors escape through China and Hong Kong rather than crossing the 155 mile-long (250km) demilitarised zone that bisects the Korean peninsula.

Defectors have complained about economic hardship in their country. UN officials warn that the communist country could face famine without massive outside aid.

The Korean peninsula was divided into the communist North and the capitalist South at the end of World War II in 1945.

North Korea, which started exporting Soviet-developed SCUD missiles to Iran and Syria in 1987, is now engaged in talks with Washington aimed at ending its missile exports.

High stakes in libel case

As Interior Minister Hassan El-Alfi and the Islamist-leaning *Al-Shaab* trade accusations of libel and corruption, the public is bedazzled by the ferocity of the exchange. **Khaled Dawoud** looks into the implications

Despite a complaint filed by Interior Minister Hassan El-Alfi with the prosecutor-general against *Al-Shaab*, the newspaper of the Islamist-oriented Labour Party has escalated an already fierce campaign against the minister. "El-Alfi's wealth is no less than LE1 billion. He conspired with major drug dealers. He is responsible for dumping unhealthy food into the country... We accuse the minister of thuggery, profiteering, confiscating property belonging to citizens, forgery of official documents and receiving bribes." These were the front page headlines of the latest issue of *Al-Shaab* on Tuesday. The paper claims that it has 73 pages of documents linking El-Alfi with Abdel-Wahab El-Habak, a former public sector manager sentenced to 10 years imprisonment for financial irregularities.

Those accusations were the same made by *Al-Shaab*'s Editor-in-Chief Magdi Ahmed Hussein when he was summoned on Sunday by the prosecutor-general for questioning *in connection* with the libel and slander complaint filed by El-Alfi.

When Hussein went to the prosecutor's office at the downtown building of *Dar El-Qadaa El-Ali* (the Supreme House of Justice), he was surrounded by lawyers, members of the Press Syndicate and opposition activists eager to express support for *Al-Shaab*'s campaign against alleged corruption and the right of the press, in a democratic country, to criticise government officials regardless of their post.

No interior minister, with all the sensitivity and influence of this post in Egypt, has ever been attacked by an opposition newspaper in the way *Al-Shaab* has been doing over the past month.

Al-Shaab started its campaign after Hussein was sentenced to two years imprisonment a month ago for libel and slander in two separate cases filed by El-Alfi's son, Alaa. In articles published more than two years ago, *Al-Shaab* alleged that Alaa used his father's influence to make illegitimate business deals and to obtain favours from government departments. Hussein was sentenced a year earlier to a total of two years imprisonment in connection with two other cases, including a one-year suspended prison term. Lawyers say that if Hussein were to lose any of his appeals in the three cases, this would remove the suspension of that sentence and he would have to spend a total of four years behind bars.

Hussein was the last among five *Al-Shaab* journalists summoned for questioning by the prosecutor over articles they wrote containing allegations of corruption against the minister. The prosecutor is expected to question El-Alfi in the coming few days. El-Alfi said in recent statements that he had documents refuting *Al-Shaab*'s accusations, claiming that the newspaper's campaign was part of a plot orchestrated by the outlawed Muslim Brotherhood in order to discredit him.

During his interrogation by the prosecutor, Hussein submitted a counter-request for investigating the minister, maintaining that his paper's allegations are true.

According to *Al-Shaab*, El-Alfi once sold a villa he bought from the government to El-Habak shortly before the latter's arrest. The paper maintains that El-Habak paid LE600,000 for the villa bought three years earlier by El-Alfi for LE88,000. At that time, the *paper claims*, El-Alfi should have been aware, because of his position, that El-Habak was facing trial in connection of financial irregularities. During the interrogation, Hussein asserted *that the profitable deal was in* return for a promise that police authorities would help smuggle El-Habak out of the country. El-Alfi vehemently denies the allegations.

Al-Shaab's editor also ac*cused the minister* of using his influence to help members of his family buy real estate at favorable prices. The editor claimed that El-Alfi helped a company owned by his son win construction contracts and removed top police officers opposed to his actions. Similar accusations were made against other top Interior Ministry officials.

Al-Shaab's campaign generated additional libel complaints against Hussein and other journalists in the newspaper. At least five libel cases have been filed against the paper by individuals whose names were mentioned in *Al-Shaab* in connection with the alleged corruption. Minister El-Alfi filed a second libel suit after *Al-Shaab* published additional allegations concerning his financial dealings.

Except for a one-page advertisement which appeared in a major national newspaper on Friday, in which leading businessmen announced their backing for the minister, many Egyptians are left wondering why the cabinet, led by Prime Minister Kamal Ganzouri, has left El-Alfi to fight the *Al-Shaab* campaign alone.

Meanwhile, editors of other national newspapers and magazines wrote editorials asking the government to respond to the accusations. They warned *Al-Shaab* that freedom of the press did not mean making unsubstantiated accusations or using language punishable by the law.

Mass murderer or scapegoat?

The case of Aida Noureddin, a nurse accused of killing intensive care patients in an Alexandria government hospital, continues to puzzle public opinion. **Amira Howeidy** investigates

A week after the local press broke the news of the arrest of a 25-year-old nurse suspected of killing between five and 18 intensive care patients, the mystery behind the unexplained deaths remains unresolved. Immediately after her arrest, Arabic-language newspapers branded Aida Noureddin a murderer *in unequivocal terms. But several newspapers later* back-tracked, suggesting that she could have been a "scapegoat" for big-shot doctors seeking to cover up medical negligence which had reached alarming proportions at the Alexandria University hospital.

According to Alexandria prosecutor Ahmed Agwa, prosecution officials have been investigating the case since the first mysterious death occurred in the hospital's neurology department six months ago. "But we are in no position to make statements about the results of the investigation before it is completed," Agwa told *Al-Ahram Weekly*.

Running parallel to the prosecutor's investigation was another administrative investigation conducted by Alexandria University itself, which included the interrogation of a number of top officials at the hospital. In addition, a reshuffle of hospital staff, especially in the neurology department's intensive care ward, was reported by the Arabic-language press.

Noureddin was arrested two weeks ago after a brain surgeon blamed her for the mysterious deaths in a statement to police. Questioned by police, the nurse confessed to injecting dozens of intensive care patients with a muscle relaxant called flaxtinil between June and December last year. By *causing the lungs to cease functioning the drug is a killer.*

However, in a series of press interviews, Noureddin retracted her confession, insisting that it was the result of police torture. She jumped, or fell, from the third floor of the police station and was taken to hospital, suffering from fractures to her pelvis and one of her legs.

A prosecution official, speaking on condition of anonymity, denied that Noureddin was tortured. "She is in hospital now and attending doctors could have easily recognised any evidence of torture," the official said. "But the doctors' report made no mention of torture."

Human rights groups believe otherwise. Moved by Noureddin's statements to the press, the Centre for Human Rights Legal Aid (CHRLA) formed a three-member defence committee headed by lawyer Adel Eid. The committee de*cided to defend Noureddin because it felt that the nurse was* "apparently innocent," the Centre's Essam Hassan told the *Weekly*. "We are merely doing what any defence lawyer would do in such cases: interviewing people and talking to the defendant but it is too early to reach conclusions," he said.

According to a press report, brain surgeon Ahmed Yehia accused Noureddin of deliberately killing a young girl by removing her oxygen mask. He was quoted as saying that she justified her act as a mercy killing. The surgeon said he merely reported the killing to the head of the department who took disciplinary action against Noureddin. He assigned her additional work.

Noureddin, who was remanded in custody at a prison hospital for 45 days last week, told reporters that she will give *up her job "once proven innocent."* "How can the hospital's management give me the title of model nurse and then accuse me of murder?" she wondered.

The hospital's nursing staff have shown signs of solidarity. They threatened to walk out en masse, but the threat remained merely a threat. They accused their union of appointing "inefficient" lawyers to defend Noureddin and "ignoring" her claims that she was tortured. They also reportedly sent documents to high state officials alleging "administrative corruption" at the university hospital and describing Noureddin as a "scapegoat" in a power conflict between her superiors.

Although police are trying to keep the investigation low-key and inaccessible to the "sensationalist press," as the prosecution official said, newspapers seized upon the case to highlight the poor conditions in government hospitals. National and opposition newspapers alike ran lengthy features exposing negligence and mismanagement.

Edited by **Wadie Kirolos**



Israeli soldiers stand guard over three Palestinians arrested for throwing stones during a demonstration in the West Bank city of Hebron—an area under Israeli control *(photo: Reuters)*

Demarcating 'security cooperation'

Palestinian President Yasser Arafat is seeking to unite Palestinian ranks despite sharp Israeli and American criticism of his recent "national unity" meeting which included representatives of the Islamist militant Hamas and Jihad groups. Graham Usher reports

Last week, representatives from the Palestinian Authority (PA), the Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO), and 11 other Palestinian political groups gathered in Gaza and Ramallah for a special "national unity conference" to meet the challenges thrown up by the crisis in the peace process.

Most Palestinian commentators saw the participation of the Islamist groups Hamas and Jihad (who boycotted earlier 'national dialogue' meetings in February and April) as testimony to Yasser Arafat's ability to preside over all streams of Palestinian opinion. It is less clear whether this tacit acknowledgment of Arafat's leadership will translate into a "common ground" for action in the weeks ahead as the conference demanded.

Not that Israel was concerned with such subtleties. Coming three weeks after the suicide bombings in West Jerusalem (for which Israel holds Hamas responsible), the mere presence of Hamas and Jihad at the conference was evidence of Arafat's "appeasement of terrorism", said Israeli government spokesman, David Bar-Ilan.

The same message was conveyed by Israeli leader, Binyamin Netanyahu, in phone calls over the weekend to President Mubarak and King Hussein. The US government also commented that Arafat's public embrace of Hamas leader Aziz Rantisi, "was not particularly constructive in resorting trust and confidence" to Israeli-Palestinian relations.

Arafat was unapologetic. The national conference was a response to the Netanyahu government's policies of humiliating the PA and an "internal affair" that concerned Palestinians only, he said.

It was a line that went down well on the Palestinian streets.

The collapse of the Oslo peace process has been accompanied by a decline in Palestinian support for Arafat and the PA. This discontent has not been confined to the PA's Islamist opposition. Recent months have witnessed a growing convergence between Hamas and elements of Arafat's own Fatah movement, including those Fatah activists who staff the PA's myriad security forces.

In June, the PA's head of Preventive Security in Gaza (and Fatah leader), Mohamed Dahlan, admitted that the PA may have "erred" in its ruthless suppression of Hamas following the suicide operations inside Israel in the spring of 1996. Now, he says, the PA and Fatah believe that "Hamas has a very important presence in building the Palestinian homeland". West Bank leader, Marwan Barghouti, has also warned that any indiscriminate arrest sweep by the PA of Hamas members "under Israel's dictates" would be resisted by Fatah, "with demonstrations if necessary."

The new sense of unity was revealed during US special envoy Dennis Ross's recent visit to Israel and the Occupied Territories. In Gaza, Nablus and Ramallah, Palestinians marched under the banner of "No PLO concessions to US demands." The marches were called by Fatah and Hamas. The "demands" were Israel's insistence that the PA arrest 200 Islamist fugitives in the self-rule areas as a "precondition" for resuming negotiations.

But Fatah's new found sensitivity to Hamas is not solely due to the rejectionist policies of the Netanyahu government. It is also a recognition of Hamas's growing strength among Palestinians.

Over the last year, Hamas in Gaza has quietly rebuilt its infrastructure, providing welfare to needy Palestinian families where PA provision (dependent on revenues collected in — and currently frozen by — Israel) has conspicuously failed.

Hamas also appears to have overcome the political schisms that nearly wrecked the movement after the 1996 suicide attacks. Then there were open divergences between Hamas's Gaza-based leadership (which publicly opposed the operations) and its Jordan-based leadership (which supported them). The recent release from Israeli and American custody of such militant leaders as Rantisi in Gaza and Musa Abu Marzouk in Jordan has, say sources, united Hamas around a new consensus of opposition not only to Oslo but also to any "fratricidal conflict" with the PA.

In such circumstances, it is understandable why Arafat has chosen to talk to his Islamist opposition rather than suppress it. Whether the national conference amounts to an "embrace" is another question.

Some Palestinian commentators believe the conference was not called by Arafat merely to discuss a united Palestinian strategy to confront Israel's policies. Arafat also wants to send a message to the Americans that he (as much as Netanyahu) had a domestic constituency that had to be assuaged, they say. The clash between these two positions became clear at the conference.

Despite the title "meeting the challenges", much of the keynote address by PA cabinet-secretary, Tayib Abdel-Rahim, was given over to emphasising how the national conference has conferred legitimacy on Arafat's leadership and how the PA would "never become an Israeli militia" like the South Lebanese Army of Antoine Lahad. For his part, Rantisi said he appreciated the PA's refusal under Israeli and American pressure to carry out mass arrests of Hamas and Jihad members, but called on Arafat and Fatah to "leave the Oslo plan, which Israel sees as a weapon to fight us". He also reiterated that there could be no real national unity as long as 120 Islamist prisoners remain interned in PA prisons. Independent figures, such as the Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC) member Haidar Abdel-Shafi, called on the PA to "permanently suspend" all negotiations with Israel.

Arafat is unlikely to do this. At the same time as the national conference, PA security chiefs were meeting with their Israeli counterparts and American CIA officers to establish a new "mechanism" for security cooperation. The events were hardly coincidental, say sources. With the security liaison, Arafat is signalling to the Americans that he is committed to working with the Israelis to prevent terrorism in Israel. And with the national conference he is signalling that the PA cannot and will not become "an Israeli militia" in the self-rule areas.

Netanyahu has long rejected this distinction. Arafat's hope is that the Americans will not do likewise.

Israel escalates war on Lebanon

Fighting escalated in south Lebanon over the past two weeks despite international calls for restraint. Zeina Khodr reports from Beirut

According to Lebanese officials, Israel's continuing attacks against south Lebanon over the past two weeks was aimed at wrecking the April 1996 cease-fire understanding, incite sectarian tensions in Lebanon and pressure the government into accepting a unilateral peace agreement with Israel.

The situation spiraled out of control after Israeli-allied South Lebanon Army (SLA) militiamen shelled the city of Sidon, killing seven civilians, including a three-month-old baby, two weeks ago. In retaliation, Hizbollah claimed responsibility for launching Katyusha rockets into northern Israel, wounding a woman and damaging a house.

Israel in turn launched the largest air strikes into Lebanon since its 17-day onslaught in April last year, code-named "Grapes of Wrath". The Israeli military said the raids were a warning to the Lebanese government to curb the activities of the Hizbollah resistance movement.

Israeli jets later destroyed a high-voltage power line on the hills of Jieh, some 18 kilometres south of Beirut, that provided electricity to nearby areas. The attack came after Israeli officials called on their government to destroy Lebanon's infrastructure and public utilities.

Israeli warplanes also rocketed a Hizbollah position in Janta in the Bekaa Valley close to the Lebanese-Syrian border late last week. Four Lebanese civilians were injured. Jets also fired rockets near a Lebanese army position in the southern village of Toufhata, narrowly missing a civilian car. The Israeli army said the attack was a warning to the Lebanese army not to fight alongside Hizbollah against its allied militia in south Lebanon. The army had fired shells at Israeli-allied militia positions in the occupation zone following the bombardment of Sidon.

In a statement, a Lebanese military source said Israeli threats will not prevent the army from exercising its legal right to defend its land and people. While touring military positions in the south, army commander General Emile Lahoud said the army would retaliate if threatened. "We intend to exercise our right of self-defence even though our enemy has more sophisticated weaponry," he said.

Shortly before the air strikes, Prime Minister Rafik Al-Hariri toured hospitals in Sidon to visit the victims of the shelling. Hariri said Israel is a terrorist state. "The repeated Israeli aggressions against Lebanon are an indication of the mentality of the Israeli government towards peace with the Arabs in general and Lebanon in particular. The indiscriminate and ferocious barrage that hit civilians, including children, is definite evidence that Israel is a terrorist and criminal country that does not want peace," Hariri said.

Meanwhile, the five-nation cease-fire group, formed to monitor the truce reached between Israel and Lebanon following the April 1996 offensive, ended four days of heated debate last weekend by issuing its harshest statement ever. The group, comprised of representatives of the US, France, Lebanon, Israel and Syria, condemned Israel's allied militia for the shelling of Sidon and held Israel responsible for attacks undertaken by its surrogate, the SLA. The group said the attack clearly violated the April truce understanding which bans attacks on civilians but sanctions resistance activities against Israeli occupying forces. Israel had tried to extricate itself from responsibility by blaming its allied militia in the south for the bombardment but Lebanese and Syrian representatives argued the militia is financed, armed and controlled by the Jewish state.

The committee also blamed Lebanon for allowing the resistance to violate the terms of the truce when it fired rockets at northern Israel.

Hours before the committee issued its statement, Khalil Al-Mussawi, an official of the Shi'ite Amal movement, and a party supporter, Abdel-Reda Barakat, were killed when a bomb placed in their car exploded in a poor neighbourhood in central Beirut. "The explosive detonated when Mussawi opened the trunk of his car. He burned to death," an eyewitness told *Al-Ahram Weekly* minutes after the explosion.

Amal, headed by House Speaker Nabih Berri, blamed Israel for the explosion. "There is no doubt that Israel was involved. It used its collaborators to plant the device. This is part of its efforts to create instability in the country," Minister Ayyoub Hemayed, also an Amal Party member, told the *Weekly* at Mussawi's funeral in his hometown of Arzun in south Lebanon.

Lebanese officials believe that one of Israel's aims behind its latest escalation of violence is to change the terms of the April cease-fire understanding. "It wants to wreck the accord because it legitimises and recognises the right of the resistance to fight Israeli occupation in the south," Deputy Ali Al-Khalil, head of the parliamentary foreign affairs committee, said.

House Speaker Berri said Israel will not wage a total war on Lebanon since it may face international pressure and condemnation. "But what it wants to do is drive a wedge between the resistance and the people and build up pressure on the resistance to stop its struggle. It also wants to undermine everything Lebanon has achieved over the past seven years," Berri said.

US Senator Robert Kerry, accompanied by US Ambassador to Lebanon Richard Jones and Lebanese Prime Minister Rafik Hariri during a visit to victims of the latest Israeli bombing of south Lebanon *(photo: AFP)*

Injecting the Euro factor

Even though the Arab countries recognise that Washington is the key player in the Middle East peace process, they are pressing for growing European involvement to balance the blind US support of Israel. Sherine Bahaa reports

According to Palestinian Minister of Planning Nabil Shaath, European pressure on Washington played an influential role in President Bill Clinton's decision to send Middle East peace envoy Dennis Ross on his recent visit to the region in yet another round of so-called "shuttle diplomacy" between Palestinian President Yasser Arafat and Israeli Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu.

Ross' visit came after the United States had turned its back on the region for months on the pretext of reassessing the situation before making a new initiative to break the deadlock in the peace process. "We have a dynamic triangle [involved in the Middle East peace process]: Egypt, Europe and the United States. The three parties are in close contact. But for us, the European-Egyptian role is important as they can pressure the United States to play a more balanced role in the peace process," Shaath said. He added that due to the "strategic alliance" between Israel and the United States, "Israel cannot turn a deaf ear to what Washington says."

Since Netanyahu took office 14 months ago, Washington has been cautious in exerting pressure on the Likud government, particularly because it openly supported the former Labour government leader Shimon Peres in the May 1996 parliament elections.

Thus, to fill in the vacuum, Europe has played a key role in the difficult task of keeping the process alive. This role was particularly important after the Palestinians decided in March to suspend all talks with Israel to protest Netanyahu's decision to build the Jabal Abu Ghneim settlement in Arab East Jerusalem.

At the time, contacts between Israel, the Palestinians and Syria were almost non-existent, and the US stuck to its role of observer. European Middle East peace envoy Miguel Moratinos, however, continued shuttling between all parties, including the Americans, in an attempt to defuse the crisis. With the participation of President Hosni Mubarak's top political adviser Osama El-Baz, Europe and Egypt floated ideas aimed at bridging the gap between Israel and the Palestinians.

Europe's involvement in the peace process became evident in 1996, during Israel's massive onslaught against Lebanon, code-named Grapes of Wrath by former Israeli Premier Peres. France played a key role in reaching the so-called "April understanding" between Israel, Syria and Lebanon that led to a cease-fire and pledges from both Israel and the Hizbollah fighters in south Lebanon not to attack civilian targets.

A few months later, due to persistent Arab demands that Europe should not confine its role to the economic support of the Palestinian Authority and Israel, the European Union members agreed to appoint Moratinos, Spain's former ambassador to Tel Aviv, as its special envoy to the Middle East to follow closely new developments in the region.

Israel has never welcomed Europe's involvement in the peace process and accuses several European capitals of being biased towards the Arabs. Although the EU succeeded in hosting the first high-level contacts in months between Israel and the Palestinians when Arafat met Israeli Foreign Minister David Levy in Amsterdam in early July, Israel's cautious attitude toward Europe remained unchanged. Shortly before the latest suicide bombings in West Jerusalem, Israel went as far as preventing Moratinos from taking part in a joint Israeli-Palestinian meeting in order to punish the European countries which voted in favour of a United Nations General Assembly resolution calling upon Israel to stop building settlements in occupied Palestinian territories.

In recent years, more European countries have reached the same conclusion as the Arabs, namely, that peace cannot be achieved in the region without establishing an independent Palestinian state. They also openly support the land-for-peace formula and repeatedly tell Israel that peaceful relations cannot be established with Syria before Tel Aviv agrees to withdraw from the Golan Heights. Such views were clearly stated in several recent European declarations following summit or foreign ministers' meetings.

In his recent meeting with students at Alexandria University, President Mubarak explained that Europe's role "complemented" that of the United States "which is the main sponsor of the Middle East peace process." Mubarak emphasised the importance of the European role and welcomed it.

The European countries have never claimed that they could replace the United States as the key mediator between the Arabs and Israel. And when successive Israeli governments rejected Europe's involvement in the peace process, the Europeans kept an open channel with the United States in the hope that it could influence it to play a more balanced role in the region. This is due to the fact that Europe, as much as the United States, has crucial interests in the region in terms of trade and oil. And as a former colonial power, Europe has a long experience in dealing with the Arab countries and knows well where its limits are, probably unlike the United States.

In appreciation of the European role, the 1991 Middle East Conference, though sponsored mainly by the United States, was held in Madrid. The secret negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians that led to the 1993 peace agreement also bear the name of Oslo, Norway, where the talks were held.

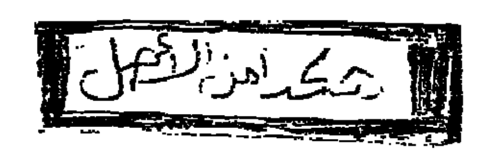
Recently, the EU agreed to appoint a Swedish security expert as counter-terrorism adviser to the Palestinian Authority. The expert is expected to complement Ross' efforts at encouraging security cooperation between Israel and the Palestinians as a prelude to a fresh peace initiative US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright might bring during her long-awaited visit to the region planned for next month.

Shaath believes that Europe has the potential to exert pressure on Israel. "Almost 70 per cent of Israeli trade, whether imports or exports, is with Europe. Thus, the Israelis are in need of tax exemptions to promote their trade," he said. "Yet, Europe has not used this potential except on rare occasions," Shaath explained. He attributed this to the fact that Israel "blackmails" Europe over past atrocities committed against Jews during the second world war.

It is also difficult for Europe to play a decisive role in the peace process, according to Shaath, because the EU is a multilateral entity. "Any political decision has to be agreed upon by the 15 member states of the Commission," he explained.

Shaath pointed out that more than 30 per cent of the total aid sent to the Middle East region comes from Europe, nearly double the amount granted by the US. As for the financial support accorded the Palestinian Authority, Shaath said the percentage is almost 50 per cent compared to the 9 per cent provided by the US.







ting the factor

Can Mandela help save Sudan?

For South African President Nelson Mandela, mediating between Sudanese warring parties is a delicate business, writes Gamal Nkrumah

During meetings with Sudanese politicians last week, South African President Nelson Mandela urged Sudan's warring parties to accept a cease-fire. "Until there is a cease-fire, there can be no permanent peace in Sudan," Mandela warned.

Few leaders in Africa would turn down President Mandela's offer of mediation, and Sudanese President Omar Hassan Al-Bashir, who was in South Africa for talks with the president, welcomed Mandela's call. Al-Bashir said that his government was committed to the peace process and had agreed to "self-determination" for southern Sudan.

Riak Machar, a former southern Sudanese renegade commander who signed a peace agreement with the government last April, also met with Mandela and Al-Bashir to discuss ways of ending the 14-year-old Sudanese civil war which has claimed over a million lives. Machar led a splinter group from the main opposition movement in south Sudan, the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA), and formed his own South Sudan Defence Force (SSDF) which includes six smaller southern Sudanese factions.

On his return from South Africa, Machar predicted that the resumption of high-level talks between Sudanese and US government officials would push the Sudanese peace process forward. "A positive development has occurred in Washington-Khartoum relations," Machar told the Sudanese official daily *Al-Anbaa*. He added that South Africa is working closely with Washington, Khartoum and the Sudanese opposition forces to bring about a breakthrough.

But observers believe it will be difficult to persuade the Sudanese opposition to accept a cease-fire now that they are winning on the battle front. And Sadig Al-Mahdi, former Sudanese prime minister and a leading opposition figure against the ruling military junta that ousted his popularly-elected government from office in 1989, denied that a breakthrough was imminent.

"There will be no cease-fire in *the armed struggle to overthrow* the regime. The only readily accepted compromise is for the regime to quit. There is no other possibility of a compromise," Al-Mahdi told reporters in Cairo last Thursday. Al-Bashir's regime is "terminally ill" he said.

Yassir Arman, SPLA spokesman, corroborated Al-Mahdi's statements and told *Al-Ahram Weekly* that, "[SPLA leader John] Garang will not meet Al-Bashir in South Africa or any other place until Al-Bashir is ready to hand over the reins of power."

Arman, a northern Sudanese Muslim, said he felt confident that the SPLA and its allies were winning the war in the south and other parts of Sudan. "[The southern capital] Juba is surrounded on four fronts and [the SPLA] controls over 80 per cent of the southern countryside," he told the *Weekly*. Arman added that he did not see secession of the south as an inevitability. "There is a strong secessionist trend within the SPLA, but during the past few years southern and northern opposition groups have learnt to fight together against the forces of oppression and reaction in Khartoum. The SPLA is politically and militarily active in many northern regions such as the Nuba Mountains and the southern Blue Nile state," Arman said.

Al-Mahdi agreed with Arman on the question of secession. "If self-determination for the southerners means secession, then we hope it will be in a climate of brotherhood and friendship like the harmonious relationship that now exists between Eritrea and Ethiopia," he said. He added that he would like to see a peaceful break-up — if secession is inevitable — between northern Sudan and southern Sudan along the lines of that of the former Czechoslovakia, and not the former Yugoslavia.

South Africa has been involved in *several mediation efforts through*out the continent. Mandela's eleventh-hour mediation between Mobutu Sese Seku, the former president of Zaire, and his then-opponent Laurent Désiré Kabila, now president of the Democratic Republic of Congo, achieved very little, too late. And Mandela has recently stressed that he wishes to play only a "facilitating role" in the Sudanese conflict.

He told reporters in South Africa last week *that the seven-nation East* African Inter-Governmental Authority on Drought and Development (IGADD) must assume the actual "mediating role".

The problem is that a majority of the IGADD members are hostile to Al-Bashir and his Islamist regime. Four IGADD member states, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya and Uganda, are actively backing Sudanese opposition groups. Sudan has long accused Eritrea and Uganda in *particular of launching military* offensives against Sudan in conjunction with Sudanese opposition forces. Last week, Khartoum accused Eritrea of amassing troops along the Eritrean-Sudanese border in preparation for an attack.

The National Democratic Alliance, the Eritrea-based Sudanese umbrella opposition group which comprises the SPLA, the Umma Party, the Democratic Unionist Party and a host of smaller opposition groups, has reacted coolly to Mandela's peace plans for Sudan. SPLA leader John Garang has, however, made several secret visits to South Africa in the past few months and had extensive talks with Mandela.

In sharp contrast, Al-Bashir's and Machar's visits to South Africa were widely publicised. The latter told *Al-Anbaa* that his trip to South Africa had "achieved its objectives and will have an immediate and positive impact on the peace process in Sudan."

Sudanese opposition leaders remain sceptical. "The South Africans have seen it all before," one opposition figure, who spoke on condition of anonymity, explained. "Machar is a sellout just like [Inkatha Freedom Party leader Chief *Mangasutu*] *Buthelezi* was. *He is* a tribalist who is dividing the ranks of the opposition. Just like Buthelezi instigated black on black violence in South Africa, so Machar masterminded southern Sudanese on southern Sudanese violence. In both cases the only winners were the oppressors: the racist apartheid regime *in South Africa and the Is*lamist regime in today's Sudan."

Iraqi Kurds resume fighting

US efforts to reach a peace agreement between the two main warring Kurdish factions in northern Iraq suffered a major setback as a tenuous cease-fire was breached, reports Omayma Abdel-Latif

A statement issued on Friday by Massoud Barazani's Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) *claimed that troops loyal* to his main rival Galal Talabani's Patriotic Union Party (PUK) bombed areas under KDP control along the border with Iran. The reported bombing was the first major breach of a fragile cease-fire agreement reached between the two Kurdish parties late last year and backed by the United States, Turkey and Britain. The KDP statement said that Talabani troops "shelled and bombed the town of Haj Omran which led to injuries among civilians, including women and children."

Commenting on the latest PUK attack, a spokesman for the KDP who was visiting Cairo told the *Weekly* that his party would maintain self-restraint, but will exercise the *right for self-defence "whenever it sees fit."*

"Barazani recently made an offer to Galal Talabani in order to reach a peaceful settlement among all Kurdish factions. But his response was to attack areas under KDP control," Omar Botan, Barazani's spokesman and head of the KDP office in Damascus, told the *Weekly*.

Botan revealed that the latest PUK attack came at a time when negotiations to resume peace talks between the two Kurdish leaders were under way. Representatives of the *United States, Turkey, Britain and the two Kurdish parties* were due to meet in Ankara next month in order to consolidate the tenuous cease-fire agreement.

Although Barazani's KDP neither retaliated against the PUK shelling nor publicly announced that it would boycott the Washington-sponsored mediation efforts, observers fear that it will now be difficult to convince the two rival leaders to return to the negotiating table.

Following Iraq's invasion of Kuwait in August 1990 and *the Gulf War seven months later, Baghdad's central gov*ernment lost control over the northern Kurdish areas. The US-led alliance imposed a no-fly zone over northern Iraq and the area was left in the hands of the two main Kurdish parties, PUK and KDP.

Although both parties are theoretically struggling for the same cause, namely self-rule and recognition of the rights of the Kurdish population, personal and tribal rivalries between Barazani and Talabani have always overshadowed the political cause. The two parties have also regularly fought over the distribution of revenue from customs on goods entering the Kurdish-controlled areas

The United States, openly working to topple Iraqi President Saddam Hussein, turned the Kurdish areas into a base for its anti-Saddam plans and remains one of the main sources of cash in the poverty-stricken Kurdish areas. Turkey, itself suffering from the separatist war led by the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK), is mainly concerned with preventing the Iraqi Kurdish parties from supporting the PKK rebels. Apart from Turkey's regular military incursions into northern Iraq to pursue PKK rebels over the past five years, Ankara is seeking to *maintain good links with both Barazani and Talabani*.

Iran, Iraq's historic rival which has its own Kurdish population, is also involved in the conflict in northern Iraq and has its own links with Talabani's PUK.

Baghdad's government, meanwhile, has announced publicly that it will not give up its sovereignty over the Kurdish areas. Saddam's troops took part in Barazani's offensive against Talabani late last year and helped the KDP to gain control over main Kurdish cities in that area. Baghdad also dealt a strong *blow to the US Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) at that time* by foiling a major plot to topple Saddam's government. US-backed agents were reportedly training in northern Iraq when Saddam's troops took control of the major Kurdish cities. Thousands of CIA-sponsored Kurds and Iraqi opponents who fled to the Turkish border were later flown to a US base in the Pacific Ocean before they were granted asylum in the United States.

Last year's developments led the United States to reactivate its role in Kurdish politics, particularly after sharp criticism in the *American press* of Washington's policy in that area. Top US officials recently received PUK leader Talabani in Washington in order to persuade him to restore a Kurdish government in northern Iraq and to conduct fresh elections. A similar invitation was extended to Barazani, but no date had been set for the visit.

"Inviting the two Kurdish leaders to Washington was partly a result of the negative press coverage of the US policy in northern Iraq and its failure to bring down Saddam's government," Mike Amitay of the Washington-based Kurdish Institute told the *Weekly*.

Amitay added that in order for the US to maintain its influence in the region and to prevent Talabani from *establishing closer ties with Tehran*, Washington granted the PUK leader $4 million in the form of humanitarian aid. Amitay, however, dismissed reports that Talabani's visit was an indication that Washington was taking sides in the rivalry between the two parties, particularly since a similar invitation was extended to Barazani.

But Barazani's spokesman, Botan, told the *Weekly* that one reason why the KDP leader has delayed his visit to Washington was that "the Kurds have little faith in the US and doubt *that it would offer anything new* to settle the Kurdish question in northern Iraq."

"The Americans are not serious enough about the Kurdish issue, and we won't accept being used as a playing card against the Iraqi government. We are not mercenaries at the US's disposal," Botan said.

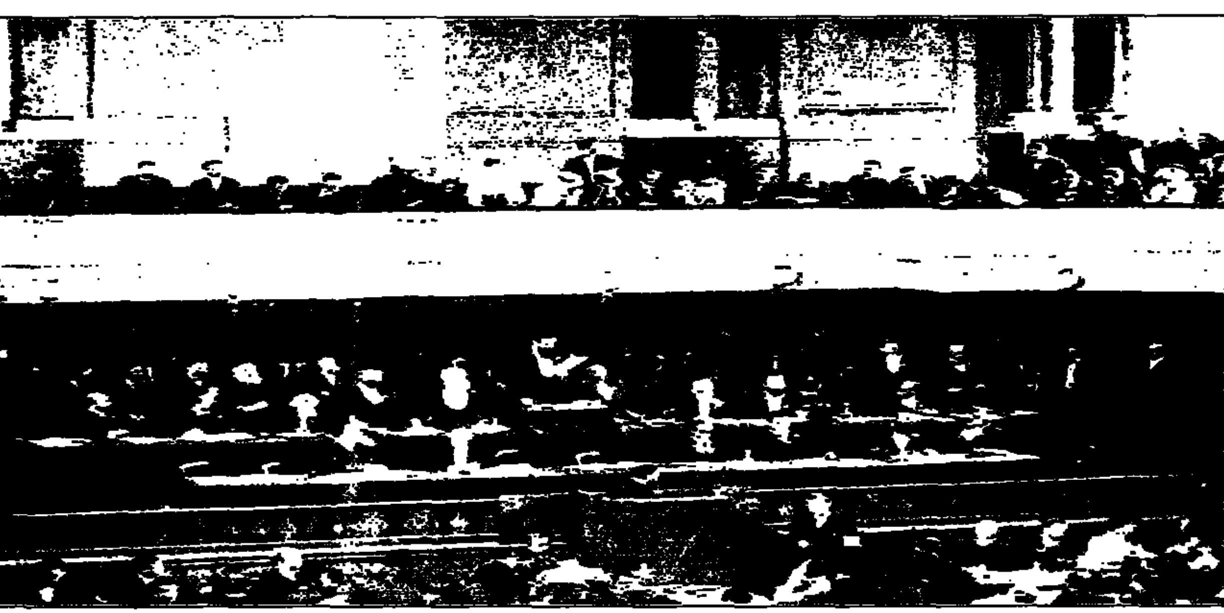
He asserted that the real solution to the Kurdish problem remains ultimately in the hands of Baghdad.

"Admittedly, the current regime in Baghdad may not be *qualified to find a settlement for the situation in northern Iraq*. However, all Kurdish factions of the north firmly believe that Baghdad remains the key player in determining the fate of the north," said Botan.

"We have always called for autonomy within Iraq. We want to live under a unified democratic Iraq," he added.

Observers, however, believe that no final settlement of the Kurdish issue is in sight.

Hundreds of representatives of Jewish and Zionist groups inaugurated celebrations in the Swiss city of Basel on Tuesday marking the anniversary of the first Zionist Congress held at the same city 100 years ago. Kamal Gaballah reports from Geneva on this, and an earlier, alternative, conference



Theodore Herzl, founder of political Zionism, addressing the first Zionist conference in Basel 100 years ago

100 years of Zionism, 100 years of racism

"*In Basel I founded the Jewish State*," Theodor Herzl, founder of political Zionism, noted in his diary on 3 September, 1897, a few days after the first Zionist Congress held in the city's casino from 29 to 31 August of the same year. "If I said this out loud today, I would be greeted by universal laughter. In five years perhaps, and certainly in 50 years, everyone will perceive it."

After 50 years and three months, the United Nations General Assembly approved the partition of Palestine, and later recognised Israel as an independent state.

At the first Zionist Congress, 196 Jewish delegates from all over the world agreed on the "Basel Programme" for the creation of a homeland for the Jewish people in Palestine. Herzl, with a few pioneer Zionists, were able to convince the delegates that the only way to solve the "Jewish problem," avoid further pogroms carried out against them in Eastern Europe and Russia and revive Jewish identity is to establish an independent homeland for the Jews. Palestine was the chosen destination, although delegates at that time discussed several other alternatives including Argentina or one of the African countries colonised by European powers.

But Palestine, and Jerusalem with its special status in the Jewish religion, remained the most favoured spot and a point of attraction for nearly all Jews. Herzl and his colleagues were mainly secularists who considered the Jewish question from a nationalist perspective without much concern to religion. But in order to gain the backing of other religious Jewish groups, Palestine became the targeted spot. Mentioning the name of Palestine or that of Jerusalem struck a chord in the hearts of many Jews who long to fulfil the Biblical prophecy of re-establishing the Jewish Kingdom in Palestine.

One-hundred years later, the Swiss government generously offered 3.5 million Swiss Francs ($2.3 million) to host the centennial celebrations of the first Zionist *Congress in the same city where it was first held*. The move was interpreted as yet another good-will gesture to Israel and influential Jewish organisations at a time when Switzerland has been facing strong criticism from Jewish groups at home and abroad for the role Swiss banks played in supporting Nazi Germany during the Second World War. Swiss banks were also accused of stealing gold which belonged to Jewish victims of Nazi concentration camps where millions of Jews were killed.

The four-day celebrations included lectures from leading Zionist figures, an academic symposium, religious ceremonies and a historic exhibition at the city's museum of art which has been running since June. It also included seminars to discuss the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. One of the Swiss papers wrote in a lengthy article commenting on the meeting that 100 years ago, Zionist pioneers led by Herzl said they were seeking to take over a "land without people in order to give it to a people (Jews) without land." But soon after those pioneers arrived in Palestine they recognised the fallacy of the unpopulated land, and became certain that in order to establish their goal, they had to fight against the Palestinian population using all means of racism and segregation necessary.

In order to keep its neutral image, the Swiss government agreed to host an anti-Zionist conference, also in Basel, organised by Palestinian, pro-Arab and leftist European and Israeli groups 10 days in advance. Not surprisingly the preparations for the anti-Zionist meeting were much more modest than those made for the Zionist gathering and, they received no funding or support from the Swiss government.

Nearly 400 people took part in the anti-Zionist conference, including *Israeli leftists*. *Palestinians* both from the self-rule areas and others living in exile, former Algerian President Ahmed Ben Bella and nationals of others Arab countries residing in Europe.

On the second day of the meeting, they all chanted Palestinian songs, and performed the traditional *dhabka* dance *sending a clear message to the world that Palestinians* also have deep roots in history, culture and civilisation.

The final statement slammed Zionism as "a racist movement". The clearest evidence for such racism, the statement added, are the daily practices of the Israeli army against Palestinians living under occupation. Participants in the meeting confirmed in their speeches and presentations that Palestinians cannot be removed from their land because of their strong resistance and the strong backing they enjoyed from Arabs and Muslim peoples all over the world. They also agreed that permanent and comprehensive peace cannot be established in the region without the creation of an independent Palestinian state with Arab East Jerusalem as its capital.

But for Swiss officials, a major concern during the anti-Zionist conference and the more recent centennial celebrations of the first Zionist Congress was the issue of security. Swiss officials said 700 soldiers were sent to Basel to support the local police force in policing the celebrations. A further 1,000 troops were on *standby, and tens of roadblocks and check-points* were set up at the city's entrances to avoid any possible "terrorist" attacks against the participants.

Although Israel was not a sponsor of the meeting, it sent a large official delegation including members of parliament, intellectuals and artists. According to sources close to the meeting, the Swiss government was keen not to provoke Arab anger, an in consequence the head of the Swiss Federation, Arnold Koller, *decided not take part personally* in the inauguration of the celebrations and sent the parliament's speaker instead. Israeli President Ezer Weizman also did not take part in the meeting and only addressed the conference through a letter which was read out by a representative of the Israeli government.

'Where can I farm?'

Nearly 350,000 Palestinian refugees live in Syria with little hope of ever returning to Palestine. Atef Saqr visited two refugee camps, the worst and best, and spoke to the residents

At the Palestinian refugee camp of Jirmana on the outskirts of Damascus, members of Hussein Issa's family sit every night on the roof of their home worrying about their deteriorating living conditions, the lack of hope and their dream to return to Palestine.

"I am 62 years old. I am past retirement age so I cannot get a job with the Syrian government. If I were in my home village [Salhiyya] *in what is* now northern Israel, I'd be able to farm my land. But here, where can I farm? On the roof?" asked Issa.

Holding his prayer beads in *his hands*, Issa recalled how he was forced to flee Palestine with his parents after they heard reports of widespread massacres committed by the Zionist gangs that became Israel's army when the *state* was established in 1948.

"I was 17 when we left home. We fled because the Jews were shooting at us and we had no weapons. When we *first arrived* in Syria, we went to a nearby village in Golan and then we moved to the countryside outside of Damascus where we bought some land to build the house," Issa said.

Issa's eldest son, Ahmed, 28, explained: "We're all poor here. The wealthy account for less than two people out of a thousand. A *government employee*, after 15 years of work, makes about 3500 Syrian liras [$70] a month. Nobody here is going to get rich. *People* raise their hands in despair because they always find that they've spent their entire month's salary before the month is over."

Asked on what he thought of the Palestinian leadership, Issa said that President Yasser Arafat should step down "because he gave up the cause the Palestinians have been fighting for since 1948." "There are still some leaders who are committed to armed struggle like Ahmed Jabril of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Command. But, in fact, all leaders should be changed because they're no longer capable of giving anything and, instead, they're stealing our hopes and ambitions," he added in a bitter tone.

Most Palestinian refugees have been in Syria since 1948. Several generations were born and died in this camp, but their longing for Palestine remains unchanged. Since the signing of the 1993 Oslo peace accords, however, the dream of return is fading faster than at any other time in the past 50 years. The Oslo Accords make no mention of the fate of the Palestinians who were forced to leave their homes in 1948, while the two sides only agreed to consider the issue of the Palestinians forced to leave after the 1967 war. But negotiations over the fate of the 1967 refugees remain stalled despite several meetings held by representatives of Egypt, Jordan, Israel and the Palestinians, so what of the 1948 refugees?

Asked about his opinion of Arafat, the face of 22-year-old Walid contorted in anger. Arafat, he said, was "a traitor" because he only was con*cerned about the people of Gaza. "He never gave* a thought to the Palestinians who were driven out in 1948," Walid said. "This means that my village, Safd, [in northern Palestine] has now become an eternal part of Israel."

Anti-Oslo sentiment is rife in the Jirmana camp, and so is support for the Palestinian opposition. The storefront of a grocer's shop on the camp's main street holds a large portrait of Fathi Al-Shaqaqi, a leader of the Palestinian Jihad movement who was assassinated by the Israeli intelligence service, Mossad, in 1995. On another storefront hang the pictures of three Palestinian freedom fighters who were killed in an operation against Israeli occupation forces in southern Lebanon last year.

There are approximately 350,000 Palestinian refugees in Syria registered with the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA), which has been looking after Palestinian refugees since 1948 but many more have not been reg*istered. About 40 per cent originally come from* the area of Hebron and Safd, 22 per cent come from Haifa, 16 per cent from Tiberia and the rest from Jaffa, Akka, Al-Nasra and Jerusalem. Most of the refugees first made their way via the Golan *to the countryside around Damascus many years* after having fled their homes. They were then joined by other refugees from the Golan in 1967.

After visiting Jirmana, described as the worst *refugee camp in Syria, the camp of Yarmouk* seemed like a modern city. Yarmouk is an extensive residential neighbourhood inhabited by 100,000 Palestinians. The buildings are several stories high, well-maintained, many with freshly painted facades. Still, the neighbourhood has not been transformed into a municipality, to remind the residents that their status is as temporary as those of the Palestinians in other camps.

In spite of the higher standards of living, residents of Yarmouk still cherish the hope of returning to Palestine.

Mahmoud, a camp resident who used to be one of Arafat's security officers in Beirut, lives with his family in a three-storey home. His son Diaa, on leave from obligatory service in the Palestinian Liberation Army, said "whenever a major battle breaks out, you'll find the camp empty of men because they'll all have volunteered to take part."

While the people cling to their customs and tra*ditions, they have not been so keen to retain their* membership in Palestinian organisations. This applies particularly to the Arafat-led Fatah movement and to a lesser extent to the PFLP and the DFLP (the Democratic Front for the Liberation of *Palestine led by George Habash). There are also* fewer supporters of Hamas and the Islamic Jihad.

Mahmoud explained that Fatah once enjoyed the greatest popularity but that since the Oslo *Accords, it lost all its members and had to close* down its offices in the camp. He explained that all the other Palestinian organisations, including those opposing the peace process, were also going through a period of stagnation.

Ahmed Siyam, another camp resident, further stated that living conditions in the camps in Syria have declined since the 1993 peace agreement was signed. He explained that the PLO used to provide work opportunities but when Arafat was forced to flee Lebanon to Tunisia in 1982, PLO employees' salaries were cut off. Many Palestinian freedom fighters returned to Syria with no source of income and were forced to beg. From 1982 onward, Palestinian organisations had little more than symbolic political efficacy.

But compared to the living conditions of Palestinian refugees in neighbouring Lebanon and Jordan, Palestinians in Syria are not faring too badly. The Syrian government provides them with working opportunities and travel docu*ments, as opposed to the Lebanese* government that is now trying hard to reduce the size of the Palestinian community by denying them entry visas and refusing to renew their travel documents when they expire.

No money, no chaos

The guerrilla warfare of Kenya's legendary Mau Mau liberation movement has long given way to political gang warfare, writes **Gamal Nkrumah**



President Daniel Arap Moi addresses his supporters in the Indian Ocean port city of Mombasa, Kenya's second-largest, which was rocked by arson attacks and ethnic violence over the past few weeks. Moi assured his people that the instigators of the violence will be severely dealt with *(photo: Reuter)*

"No money, no chaos," grimacing youngsters yelled into the television cameras of international media representatives in the Kenyan port city of Mombasa. Last month, stick-wielding stone-throwing youths threatened that unless the government paid them 200 Kenyan shillings ($4) each they would not bully opposition demonstrators. According to the independent Kenyan newspaper, *The Standard*, they were not given money, so the opposition rally went ahead undisturbed.

In Kenya, politicians and political parties are resorting to hiring angry unemployed youths to score political points. The picture projected on camera is terrifying. In the 1950s and early 1960s, Kenya's Mau Mau movement hit the international headlines when a few European settlers were butchered in Kenya's "White Highlands" in the struggle for liberation despite the fact that the vast majority of the victims of Mau Mau violence were Africans. And in the same way today, the tourists on whom Kenya's economy thrives escaped the violence that has gripped the country for the last six weeks.

The anti-colonial "armed struggle" was a hallowed expression then; today it is profane. All over Africa, militias are being deployed against defenseless civilians and innocent bystanders. Politicians have private militias, and so do political parties. "The emergence of militia-type gangs must be snuffed out in its infancy," *The Nation*, Kenya's much respected daily, warned in an editorial last Tuesday. The *Standard*, another independent newspaper, warned of impending disaster and described the impunity with which government provocateurs disrupt opposition parties' rallies.

Kenyan opposition parties charge that the government foments unrest in a bid to postpone upcoming elections and that the ruling Kenya African National Union (KANU) has recruited poverty-stricken youngsters to turn opposition demonstrations into running battles with security forces over the past few months.

Two weeks of mob violence and arson attacks in Mombasa ended last Sunday, leaving at least 45 dead and hundreds injured. Because the violence took place in the city centre, most of the tourist facilities in the northern and southern beach front suburbs of the city escaped the violence. Indeed, tourist agencies said that tourist arrivals and departures were running on schedule and that there were no cancellations. So far, the violence has not affected Kenya's tourist industry. Some 770,000 tourists visit Kenya annually and Kenya netted some $465 million in 1996 from tourism.

Opposition leaders warn that Kenyan President Daniel Arap Moi is training paramilitary commandos to punish his increasingly vocal opponents. These commandos, called the *Jeshi la Mzee* or Old Man's Army in reference to Moi, will have to be deal with promptly if opposition calls for democracy will not fall by the wayside.

"Could have done better," is Kenya's opposition parties' verdict on the aging Moi and his ruling party's proposals for limited political reforms. Reflecting the mounting national tension, Kenya's reform group, the National Convention Executive Council (NCEC), rejected Moi's reform legislation and went ahead with a country-wide strike last Friday, "because there had been no meaningful or useful response from the government on demanded reforms," an opposition spokesman said.

Moi, who toured Mombasa and its environs last week, assured the Kenyan people that he will deal severely with the instigators of the violence. He absolved his government of any blame. But, Kenya's Roman Catholic Archbishop Ndingi Mwana'a Nzeki openly questioned Moi's commitment to end the violence. Last Saturday, Nzeki said that it was "unbelievable" that Kenya's intelligence services did not know of the planned attack on a Mombasa police station which was the target of an arson attack. America's Ambassador to Kenya described unrest in Mombasa as "organised and cold-blooded."

Last week, Kenya's opposition parties accused a close Moi associate, Minister of State in the in the President's Office Nicholas Biwott and the Mombasa billionaire Rashid Sajjad, who also is reputed to have close business connections with the president of bankrolling the ethnic violence and arson attacks in Mombasa.

Mombasa, in Kenya's Muslim heartland, is a stronghold of the unregistered Islamic Party of Kenya (IPK) which espouses an Islamist ideology. The IPK is fanatically anti-Moi and anti-KANU. Sheikh Khalid Balala, leader and founder of the IPK, is opposed to the conservative Muslim clerics who have distanced themselves from him and his movement. A charismatic orator, Balala draws the crowds — especially the young.

Kenya's nine million Muslims, either ethnic Somalis or ethnic Swahilis from Mombasa and the Indian Ocean coast, have divided political loyalties. Unemployed non-local "up-country" immigrants, often recruited by KANU as *Jeshi la Mzee*, voted overwhelmingly for Moi and KANU during the 1992 elections while the vast majority of Mombasa's indigenous residents voted for the opposition parties. Ethnic loyalties and gang-warfare go hand in hand.

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) suspended loans to Kenya on 1 August. Kenyan Ambassador to Egypt Mohamed Mahmoud told *Al-Ahram Weekly* that "the stoppage of financial aid to Kenya was purely political."

The international media must believe that freedom of expression exists in Kenya, say government supporters. The ambassador defended his government by saying that it granted permission for the opposition party to hold a rally on 26 July. "The fact that Kenya's print media is free and vibrant is not taken into account," he said.

Last Monday, the United Nations stepped up security for over 4,000 UN employees, their families and dependents following Kenya's civil disturbances. Kenya has 34 UN offices responsible for eastern and southern Africa, most of them headquartered in Nairobi. There are some 900 international staff, 1,800 dependents and spouses, and 1,500 Kenyan employees. The world body has no money to help quell local chaos, but at least it can help protect its own employees.

Russia to the rescue

Russia is helping to break the deadlock in talks between Georgia and secession-bent Abkhazia, writes **Abdel-Malik Khalil** in Moscow

On 14-15 August, a breakthrough in the Georgian-Abkhaz dispute took place. Georgian President Edouard Shevardnadze and Abkhaz leader Vladislav Ardzinba met in Tbilisi, the Georgian capital, in an attempt to end the five-year battle over Abkhaz secession.

A bilateral agreement, which stated that both sides are willing to resolve the conflict, to establish peace, to respect each other's wishes and not to resort to arms, was signed. However, much remains unresolved, including the key question of Abkhazia status.

The tiny Black Sea region of Abkhaz has fought a long battle to be free of Georgian rule. One of the bloodiest wars in the former Soviet Union, which began in 1992 and lasted for 20 months, left more than 10,000 people dead after the Georgians invaded Abkhazia and were beaten back. Abkhaz declared its independence but this was neither officially recognised by Russia nor the West.

Russia, however, secretly supported the Abkhaz secessionists at the beginning of the conflict and the Georgians pinned the blame for Abkhaz secession on Russia.

Five years after the outbreak of war the Abkhaz economy is in a shambles. Georgia, too, suffers many economic ills. Georgia lost a potentially rich region — Abkhazia's beautiful beach resorts, which were considered the most beautiful in the former Soviet Union, could be transformed into an international tourist destination. Abkhazia also has coal reserves, tea and citrus plantations.

Sergei Shamba, Abkhazia's new foreign minister, warned that there is no alternative to negotiations and urged Russia and Georgia to lift the economic embargo imposed on Abkhazia more than three years ago. "Russia is still hoping to reunite Abkhazia and Georgia. It is possible that Russia will soon sacrifice us in order to win Georgia over," he said. The conflict has turned 300,000 people into refugees.

Russia is taking a pro-Abkhaz position, but at the same time doing its best not to spoil its relations with Georgia. Russian diplomats are trying to find a solution that will give Abkhazia some measure of autonomy within a reunified Georgia.

In Abkhazia, which is controlled by Russian peace-keeping troops, Russia is playing a new role and moving away from its old imperialist ways. Facing its own problems in Chechnya, Russia is no longer keen on encouraging separatists in other republics of the former Soviet Union. Old-style imperialism is now replaced by economic self-interest. As far as Abkhazia is concerned, Russia hopes that a peace agreement will help its bid to secure pipeline routes for Caspian oil through Abkhaz territory.

This month's Georgian-Abkhaz negotiations took place in the presence of Russian minister of foreign affairs, Evgeny Primakov, and lasted for 10 hours. Primakov's role cannot be underestimated. Both sides stressed the idea that the role of Russia in the conflict-solving process was indispensable. The Georgian-Abkhaz peace deal was a victory for Russian diplomacy.

During the last few months, Georgia tried to sideline Russia from the negotiations and woo Western powers. However, Russia and Abkhazia refused to let Western powers join the negotiating table. Primakov, who was born in Tbilisi, persuaded Georgia to accept his mediation.

The negotiations took place on 14 August — five years to the day that the war between the parties began. It was a symbolic date.

Although the negotiations ended with a signed agreement, many problems remain. President Shevardnadze told journalists that the most important step had been made — the psychological barrier between the two warring parties had been overcome.

But critics say that Abkhaz leader Ardzinba's talk of "two countries" — Abkhazia and Georgia — made it evident that the key question of Abkhazia's status remained unresolved. Georgian Foreign Minister Irakly Menagrishvili said long negotiations are needed to iron out differences over the final status of Abkhazia.

Georgia's ambassador to Russia, Vazha Lordkipanidze, said that Tbilisi will insist on Abkhazia rejoining Georgia as an autonomous province. A Georgian delegation is expected in Sukhumi, the Abkhaz capital, next Wednesday. The questions of transportation, communications and power supply are scheduled to be discussed then. A meeting between Russian President Boris Yeltsin, Shevardnadze and Ardzinba in Moscow is in the offing.

Out of Africa

Francophone Africa was once considered France's mirror, reflecting its fears, doubts and aspirations. But things have changed, reports **Heba Samir**

Last Saturday, hundreds of people demonstrated to mark the anniversary of a police raid on the Paris Church of Saint Bernard that ended in a two-month standoff with 277 African immigrants who had taken shelter inside.

The Socialist-led government, which took office in June after a leftist legislative upset, promised to undo hard line immigration laws put in place by two rightist governments. The issue has also brought to the fore France's deteriorating relationship with its former African colonies.

A fortnight ago, France was poised for a historic reduction of its military forces in Africa, a continent in which it has long flexed its muscles as a former colonial superpower. The newly elected Socialist Prime Minister Lionel Jospin recently sent his Defence Minister Alain Richard and Cooperation Minister Charles Josselin on an African tour of three countries: Gabon, Chad and the Central African Republic, to start outlining cuts.

France's leftist government has endorsed and broadened a plan by the previous centre-right administration to reportedly cut its military presence in Africa from 8,000 troops to 5,000. However, Richard told reporters in Paris that "France would make no [unilateral] decisions without consulting the nations involved."

In a meeting with Central African President Ange-Felix Patasse, Richard announced that France intends to close down a key military base in the north of the Central African Republic and wind down another in Bangui, its capital. Nonetheless, France will maintain material and logistical support for an African force that has taken over the policing of the capital from the departing French troops following accords last February that ended the latest army mutiny.

Although there has been no official reaction from the Francophone African governments concerned, it is likely that they will not be too happy about the departure of the French troops. The Central African Republic, for instance, earns $21.6 million a year from the French military presence on its soil. And the fact that the previous conservative government of Alain Juppé imposed a 50 per cent devaluation of the CFA (Francophone Africa's franc) in 1995 has already caused considerable hardship for Francophone African nations.

Other economic matters are also salient. Ivory Coast President Henri Konan Bedie said recently that his country's economic development has been made possible by the security provided by the French military presence. According to him, the "French military presence deters external aggression and allows us to avoid spending our meagre budgets on arms purchases."

To help offset the departure of its troops, France will help set up military academies and train peacekeeping and national police forces. "Africa is emerging from its former zones of [foreign] influence," said French Foreign Minister Hubert Vedrine in an interview with the French weekly *Le Nouvel Observateur*. "It's not that France is withdrawing, it's that all countries — and not just France — are becoming interdependent," he said.

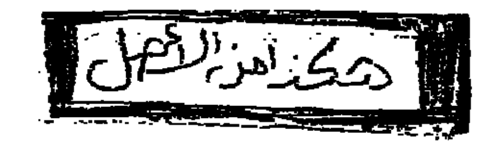
At one point, France had control over one-third of the African continent and during the heyday of de-colonisation in the 1960s, France concluded defence treaties with eight African countries and military cooperation agreements with 23 others. This made its military presence internationally recognised. But financing the upkeep of large numbers of troops is an expensive business so Premier Lionel Jospin's new Socialist-led government has decided to streamline defence operations in Africa.

Many analysts characterise French policy towards Africa as contradictory. On one hand, due to financial and public considerations, there is a need to decrease the French military presence in Africa. On the other, France cannot overlook its historic economic and strategic interests on the continent especially considering the growing American influence there. France fears losing Africa as a source of oil and other minerals, and as a market for its construction and defence companies.

The French Socialist Party has long been critical of France's African policy, pointing to its neo-colonial nature and its support of dictators. Josselin told reporters at a news conference in Paris this month, "Today's Africa is not what it was in the 1960s. The French army is itself being reorganised and the notion of mobility has changed."

France, more than any other historic colonial power, has maintained ties that bind it to Africa. It props up regional currencies and economies in return for markets and investment opportunities. But Chirac appears to have recognised that the days of French unilateral intervention in Africa are over. Times have drastically changed. France is no longer seen as a stabilising force in post-Cold War Africa. Today, many African leaders question the relevance of France's role as Africa's guardian angel, especially at a time when Paris is pursuing a hostile policy towards its African immigrants.

"This is the end of an epoch," lamented the conservative daily *Le Figaro* on its front-page editorial recently over the withdrawal of French military presence from Africa.



Russia to the rescue
Russia is helping to break the deadlock in talks between Georgia and secession-bent Abkhazia writes Abdel-Malik Khalil in Moscow

Stock market boon

A series of new regulations has improved share performance on the stock market over the last three weeks. **Sherin Abdel-Razek** reports.

After almost six months of steady decline, the capital market has began a slow recovery process in part, argue experts, as a result of the implementation of a number of new regulations organising trading.

The new regulations, introduced by Economy Minister Youssef Boutros Ghali just weeks after he was appointed to his post, stipulate a new way of calculating the closing prices of traded shares.

Share prices are now determined by the average weighted prices of the last 100 shares traded.

"This means that to get the closing price of any share at the end of the day, we add the value of traded shares (the number of shares multiplied by their different selling prices)," explained Amany Hamed, managing director of Okaz Brokerage and Management Consultants. "Then this total is divided by the number of shares traded throughout the day," she said.

The new system has been lauded by many brokers like Hamed as effectively putting to an end the practice whereby some traders would, at the end of the day, execute orders at high prices — making share values appear higher than they actually were.

In a similar move aimed at increasing the volume of market transactions, Boutros Ghali decided to cancel the market listing of companies whose shares have not been traded for the past six months.

"Currently, there are hundreds of private and state-owned companies enjoying tax incentives for just being listed on the exchange," Hamed said.

Companies listed on the stock exchange are entitled to a tax exemption totaling 10 per cent of their capital.

"The threat of cancellation from the exchange lists forces these companies to trade their shares, and increase total market turnover," she said.

In a parallel move, the Capital Market Authority (CMA) has cancelled the five per cent per day share price increase ceiling it imposed at the beginning of the year.

Market experts and investors had criticised this ceiling, saying that it undermined free market forces and meant that share prices were not able to reflect their real value.

Other new regulations approved by the CMA and Boutros Ghali include a qualifying exam which senior officials of brokerage companies must pass. The test is designed to ensure that these individuals have a strong grasp of the market in which they are operating.

CMA *officials* are currently discussing the evaluation guidelines of this exam with members of the Egyptian Capital Market Association (ECMA) — a private association whose members are top professionals and institutions operating in the capital market.

Venture capital ventures into Egypt

Venture capital funds find a foothold in the Egyptian market.

The Capital Market Authority (CMA) this week granted an Egyptian private company a license to establish the first direct investment fund in Egypt.

Al-Ahly for Development and Investment, with CMA approval in hand, will set up an LE200 million fund and choose a specialised company to manage it.

These types of funds, also known as venture capital funds, specialise in investing in private small and medium- sized enterprises. After a certain period of time, during which the fund contributes to the growth of the project, it pulls out of the project, realising big capital, low risk gains.

However, venture capital funds also invest in high-risk operations such as companies *still being established*, as well as loss-making companies which need refinancing.

In the latter case, the fund buys the company's debt from the bank, or buys its equity. When the company is restructured and starts showing profits, the fund divests its stake. In doing so, direct investment funds play a significant role in stock market development and increasing the growth rates. Non-traditional ways of finance are used to help loss-making projects adjust shortcomings in their financial structures.

The new fund is being viewed by market experts and analysts as a welcome addition to a market in which there seems to be no place for the shares of loss-making public sector companies slated for privatisation.

It is also hoped that through their involvement in loss-making companies, these funds will help in increasing the number of profit-making shares traded in the market, upgrading the efficiency of both the primary and secondary markets

Bio-tech ban dropped

Genetically-engineered US crops will not require a *certificate* of health, officials said as they backed down from a previous decision. **Gihan Shahine** reports

Egypt's Health Ministry has revoked a ban imposed on genetically-engineered agricultural imports from the United States, with officials saying that the initial ban was merely intended as a precautionary measure for public heath reasons.

The ministry's decision, issued one month ago, was followed by an order delaying implementation for three months to enable the government sought to study whether genetically-engineered foodstuffs actually were harmful to public health.

This step was followed by another ministry decision requiring that all shipments of cereals or dry legumes be accompanied by a certificate stating that no transgenic procedures were used in the cultivation of the crop.

US Department of Agriculture officials steadfastly maintained that genetically-engineered crops were not harmful to the health, and argued that the ban would effectively discriminate against or exclude certain products on the international market.

Egyptian officials, despite no evidence to back up their concerns, resisted revoking the ban.

Zeinab Abdel-Halim, head of the Ministry of Health's Nutrition Department, said that the ministry's decree was not intended to ban US imports of bio-tech products, but merely to regulate them.

But statements by Agriculture Minister Youssef Wali, stressing that genetic engineering has been instrumental in the manufacture of vital products such as insulin, seemed to tip the balance in favour of revoking the ban.

The final step to revoking the ban came during a meeting between the US agriculture secretary and Egypt's ambassador to the US two weeks ago.

Both men emerged from the meeting agreeing that the ban should no longer stay in effect.

"Egypt has finally agreed that US imports which are not produced by genetic engineering, or those that are genetically-modified, but are normally used in the producing country, should not be accompanied by a certificate," the agriculture secretary was quoted as saying by Reuters.

A committee of representatives from the ministries of health, trade, agriculture and scientific research met to discuss the decision.

"We found that in most cases, genetic engineering techniques were perfectly safe," said Abdel-Halim.

Moreover, she added, all imports are usually accompanied by documents stating whether the product is used in its country of origin.

"If the producing country uses the genetically-engineered crop, that is adequate proof that it is perfectly safe," stated Abdel-Halim. "In case of any doubt, we would send the product to a specialised lab for analysis."

Edited by **Ghada Ragab**

Money & Business

Trade fair in Oman

EGYPT *will participate* in the Muscat International Trade Fair, due to be held in Oman from 27-31 October. Egypt's participation in the exhibition comes within the framework of promoting friendly relations and implementing the Arab-Omani Joint Committee's recommendations to enhance trade relations between the countries. Minister of Supply and Foreign Trade Dr. Ahmed El-Guweili issued a decision to start preparatory procedures. Many Egyptian companies will display their products at the exhibition.

New companies established

THE COMPANIES' Committee of the Ministry of Economy headed by Ahmed Fouad Atta, first undersecretary of the ministry, approved the establishment of 38 new companies in the period from 17-21 August with total authorised capitals of LE780 million.

The undersecretary said that these companies are expected to provide 190,000 job opportunities.

Among the new companies are 27 joint stock companies. The companies will operate in the fields of foodstuffs, agriculture, trade and tourism.

Egyptian products exhibition in Bahrain

ALI SALEH Al-Saleh, Bahraini trade minister, said during a meeting with Medhat Mansour, general manager of Pyramids Advertising Agency and organiser of the Egyptian Products Exhibition in Bahrain, that his ministry would offer all its facilities to make the exhibition a true success. "It is a real opportunity for businessmen in Egypt and Bahrain to increase commercial exchange and embark on a numerous *joint venture* projects," he said.

The exhibition will be held from 13-20 October at the Bahrain International Exhibition Centre.

Egyptian ambassador to Bahrain Mahmoud Esmat said that in light of recent decisions passed to encourage exports and raise production levels in terms of both quality and quantity, Egyptian products will have a fair shot at entering the Bahraini market through this exhibition.

Mansour added that no effort is being spared to provide expertise and services to invited companies of this important exhibition. The invited sectors which are expected to participate in the exhibition include:

— Real estate companies.
— Ready-made clothes, furniture and carpets.
— Engineering, electrical, metal and electronic industries.
— Chemical and building industries.
— Pharmaceutical and cosmetic industries.
— Leather and tanning industries.
— Household tool industries.
— Gifts and handicrafts.

Mansour said that the Bahraini market is considered an excellent market for Egyptian products, adding that the exhibition will be a good opportunity for Egyptian businessmen to make direct sales.

Reserve your space now for ACITEX '98

WITH a view towards increasing the awareness of the role of computers and information technology in all aspects of everyday life, and showcasing the rapid developments taking place in the computer and information field, Al-Ahram Establishment is holding its annual computer and *information technology exhibition, ACITEX,* which has now become a major event, both locally and abroad. Many participants are expected this year, along with representatives from international computer exhibitions from Germany and elsewhere, vying with each other for a place in this important exhibition.

To increase the number of companies and sponsors this year, the exhibition will be held at the Cairo International Conference Centre, with its large floorspace and wings that are sure to be able to accommodate exhibitors and sponsors without overcrowding.

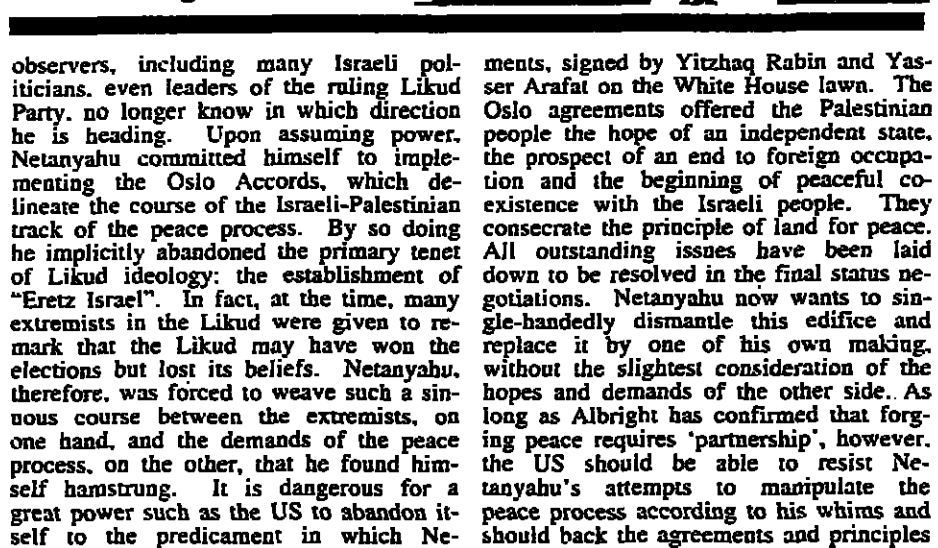
Its worth mentioning that ACITEX will coincide with the 6th annual International Conference on Artificial Intelligence, which will also be held at the Cairo International Conference Centre. The conference will be organised by the Egyptian Computer Association, *in cooperation with the American* University in Cairo, the AMAC Centre. The AMAC Centre will also be responsible for tabulating statistics on attendees of the conference and providing them to exhibiting and sponsoring companies for planning marketing strategies. This undertaking will be conducted in cooperation with the British Computer Association and a team of international experts.

Exhibition space is available at easy-term payments until 1 October 1997. For more information and reservations, telephone 3391071 or fax 3941866.

Joining the club

Claiming responsibility

Peace will bring stability to the Middle East, writes Ibrahim Nafie. The Likud does not seem to realise this fact. Can the US drive the message home?



Madeleine Albright is laying the groundwork for her forthcoming visit to the Middle East. Observers predict that this, her first visit to the Middle East since her appointment as secretary of state, will yield tangible results. The fact that she has finally decided to undertake this tour surely signals her determination to extricate the peace process from the current stalemate, caused by Netanyahu's policies.

Albright has already delivered an explicit message by announcing that US foreign policy toward the Middle East conflict aims at reaching a just and lasting peace through a negotiated settlement based on UN Security Council resolutions 242 and 338. She has emphasised the fundamental principles behind the peace process, including the principle of land for peace, upon which all Arab-Israeli agreements to date have been founded. The message has been well received in the Arab world, particularly since Albright made her decision to visit the region at a time when the peace process had virtually collapsed because of Netanyahu's attempts to undermine these same principles.

From the Arab perspective, the current crisis in the peace process is still acute. US envoy Dennis Ross has achieved minor progress by promoting a degree of Palestinian-Israeli cooperation in security matters. This, however, is insufficient, and for over six months the US has refrained from engaging itself to push the peace process forward. The Arabs, therefore, have pinned high hopes on Albright's forthcoming visit.

Certainly, the Americans must be aware that Netanyahu has so blatantly abused the peace process as to threaten it with collapse. Additionally, he has been buffeted by such contradictory forces that observers, including many Israeli politicians, even leaders of the ruling Likud Party, no longer know in which direction he is heading. Upon assuming power, Netanyahu committed himself to implementing the Oslo Accords, which delineate the course of the Israeli-Palestinian track of the peace process. By so doing he implicitly abandoned the primary tenet of Likud ideology: the establishment of "Eretz Israel". In fact, at the time, many extremists in the Likud were given to remark that the Likud may have won the elections but lost its beliefs. Netanyahu, therefore, was forced to weave such a sinuous course between the extremists, on one hand, and the demands of the peace process, on the other, that he found himself hamstrung. It is dangerous for a great power such as the US to abandon itself to the predicament in which Netanyahu finds himself.

The US must also realise that it is not simply an intermediary in the negotiating process but a guarantor of the Oslo agreements, signed by Yitzhaq Rabin and Yasser Arafat on the White House lawn. The Oslo agreements offered the Palestinian people the hope of an independent state, the prospect of an end to foreign occupation and the beginning of peaceful coexistence with the Israeli people. They consecrate the principle of land for peace. All outstanding issues have been laid down to be resolved in the final status negotiations. Netanyahu now wants to single-handedly dismantle this edifice and replace it by one of his own making, without the slightest consideration of the hopes and demands of the other side. As long as Albright has confirmed that forging peace requires 'partnership', however, the US should be able to resist Netanyahu's attempts to manipulate the peace process according to his whims and should back the agreements and principles that have already been established.

The US secretary of state would not want to come to the region in order to be sidetracked by subsidiary issues and technical details. Even such matters as hammering out the details of Palestinian-Israeli security cooperation can be left to the experts such as Dennis Ross. Rather, she would want to address the substance of the current crisis: namely, the current Israeli government's attempts to steamroll the original principles of the peace process. The US has a responsibility to declare its unequivocal stand on this problem. Only a segment of the Israeli people differs with the Palestinians over the nature and meaning of the peace process. This segment is represented by the ruling Likud Party, headed by Netanyahu, while the opinions of the broader segment of public opinion in Israel — over 60 per cent according to a recent survey — coincide with those of the Palestinians on issues such as the creation of an independent Palestinian state, the future of Jerusalem, and even Israeli withdrawal from the Golan. Perhaps the hopes and aspirations of the majority of the Israeli people has best been expressed by Shimon Peres, who said: "Peace itself is what will bring security."

US State Department officials have said that Albright's visit will not be restricted to addressing the Palestinian-Israeli situation, but will touch upon other vital US interests in the region. These interests depend upon regional political and economic stability. We would expect the US secretary of state to demonstrate, in practical terms, that peace is the primary condition for regional stability. The pursuit of peace is not a secondary issue, to be resolved by the parties immediately involved. Rather, it obligates the US to assume the onus it has taken upon itself since the Madrid peace conference in 1991, and to translate this responsibility into concrete action.

Al-Ahram Weekly

Children as hostages

The lukewarm reception Israeli Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu received in Japan this week is proof enough that few, if any other than the US and Israel itself, view the blockade of Palestinian territories as a means of moving along the peace process.

In Israel, calls to lift the ban came from Infrastructure Minister Ariel Sharon. His reasons, however, were less than altruistic or humanitarian. The clamp-down, Sharon explained, was crippling Israel's economy. He then said there were other ways of pressuring the Palestinian leadership.

But pressuring Arafat into complying with "security" measures that border on mass arrests and a complete disregard for the human rights of Palestinians seems a surefire way to undermine any and all efforts to restore peace. Simply stated, such pressure would destroy Arafat and Oslo's legitimacy in the eyes of the Palestinian people.

This, however, does not seem to concern Netanyahu. Rather, he offers glib comments and libelous insinuations on the reasons as to why Arafat would meet with extremist Palestinians. While anyone else can see that the best way to cement power and move forward in peace it to bring together all the parties that will invariably be a part of any Palestinian state, the Israeli premier sees this as a threat to Israeli security.

Netanyahu would have Arafat follow the same approach he is using in-house — firing tear gas into junior-high girls' schools, rounding up anyone that looks remotely suspicious and then starving a population into submission.

Is it any wonder that the Japanese were less than willing to conclude any substantial deals with Israel?

Still, the US continues to side with Netanyahu, refusing to speak out against the closures, the sanctions, the attacks on children and civilians in Israel and south Lebanon. The focus of their criticism has been Arafat, who has been warned by Secretary of State Albright to shape up — or else she won't come to the region.

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History's complex riddles

In a series of three articles beginning today, Mohamed Sid-Ahmed discusses some problems of present-day history

I remember having impressed my history teacher when I was still a child of eight by asking him why history was all about kings and famous people and never about common folk. Many years later I came to understand, partly thanks to a close familiarity with Marxism, that history is actually the product of interaction between people and cannot be reduced to stories about exceptional personalities only. However, what is noteworthy is that although the meaning of history is now known to us, its manipulation is far from over. And, as the distortion of history is now a deliberate act and not just the result of ignorance, the crisis of history as a scientific endeavour has acquired critical dimensions.

The two examples that spring to mind when we talk of the deliberate falsification of history are the Nazis and the Soviets. Hitler's propaganda minister, Joseph Goebbels is credited as the author of the aphorism that "a lie, repeated often enough, becomes a truth". According to Goebbels, what is important is not the event but how it is transmitted. The transmission of news is a continuous process, the occurrence of an event is instantaneous. It can have witnesses or not. Knowledge of an event is always shaky and depends more on how it is reported than on what actually happened.

The Soviets rewrote their history several times. Photographs of decisive moments during the Bolshevik Revolution would depict Lenin with Trotsky at his side, while Stalin would appear in the periphery of the picture as a militant charged mainly with executive tasks. When Stalin became the unchallenged leader and Trotsky was denounced as a traitor and exiled, the same photograph would depict Stalin occupying the central position, while Trotsky would be omitted from it altogether.

Nor were the Soviets the first to resort to such practices. They were carrying on a tradition that goes as far back as the Pharaohs, who erased the names of ancestors and rivals from temples and obelisks and inscribed their own instead. Because the dead are in no position to defend their legacy, the living can take credit for feats achieved by their predecessors. This has happened time and again, from the dawn of history up to the present. What happened in history is always subordinated to objectives related to the present. History is what we want history to be, not what it actually was. People in the present select from history what corroborates their reading of events or serves their designs and ignore the rest. Because history has a dimension in the present, and as interests and concerns in the present are ever-changing, history is indefinitely rewritten.

History is like an exclusive club to which some gain admittance, some are kept out. The life of every individual is spent partially on stage, so to speak, partially, off stage, when he or she is busy with all the private functions of everyday life. It is only when on stage that an individual is a potential source of news; what happens off stage is known to nobody but the person, him or herself.

Throughout history, much of what made history, of what should have been on stage, as it were, was not. After a battle, many suffered in silence and died in silence and no one ever knew about it, not because the event was not 'historical', but because no one was there to report it. Today we are living just the opposite process. Much of what used to be played out off stage is now deliberately put on stage. Thanks to information technology, reporters can be everywhere and the ubiquitous paparazzi are there to capture celebrities on film at their most intimate moments. Modern literature is successful when it probes the darker areas of human activity which were traditionally regarded as indecent, immoral or abnormal. Private life is shrinking while exposure to the public is becoming all-encompassing. What is off stage is gradually disappearing while what is on stage is extending indefinitely.

But what is it that is on stage: is it the real, the objective reality; or 'objective reality' as perceived by a given observer, a given subject? To what extent does a picture or a news report faithfully reproduce what actually happens? Is what is reported more representative of the perceptions of the story-teller than of the tale he is telling? If that is the case, is there any room for history, despite the contemporary information explosion, despite the plethora of information, not its scarcity?

I remember an essay written two decades ago by a Norwegian scholar, Johan Galtung, under the challenging title: "Some remarks on the 2500 years that have elapsed; and some further remarks on the 500 to come". I do not think that Galtung could have written a similar essay today. From the methodological point of view, he tried to make a distinction between variables and invariants in history in the aim of casting some light on likely developments in future. The collapse of many of the social engineering experiments undertaken this century have introduced a note of caution in any attempt to forecast or predict future events. Randomness, in this respect, is no less important than determinism. With our present technological ability to disturb the ecological balance and hence our planet's ability to sustain life, it has become imperative to plan for the future. A difficult proposition with the riddles of history becoming more complex than ever.

A common cause

By Naguib Mahfouz

It is difficult to know what to say about the stalemate in the Arab-Israeli conflict. I would have imagined that, after half a century of begging and bullying for peace, Israel would have leapt at the chance for a settlement. One also would have imagined that President Clinton, in his second and last term in office, would have been able to exercise some influence over Israel instead of letting it get away with murder, as if he had a third term to think about. As for the Arabs, we have no option but to insist on peace, and seek to achieve it by every possible means. Peace is the only alternative.

Perhaps one way of getting back on course is to pay more attention to the notion of an Arab common market. This may seem unrelated to peace, but it is, in my opinion, our means of forcing Israel to consider a settlement. It is the means by which we can achieve economic development and, in the meantime, acquire power in a world that pays scant attention to the weak. Only by becoming a power to contend with will it be possible for us to restore our self-esteem and command Israel's respect. Israel will then find it less easy to disregard the Arabs' rights.

We must begin establishing this market today. It must not necessarily be construed as an aggressive move. On the contrary, it will provide the environment in which peace may flourish. It will not bear fruit in the short term, but the preliminaries will have an impact on the balance of power once the international community realises that we are determined to see this project succeed.

Based on an interview by Mohamed Salmawy.

The Press This Week

More pangs and fears

Al-Ahram: "Lebanon is burning. The Palestinian people are besieged. And the Golan is occupied. The perpetrator, in all these cases, is one: international Zionism. This is the truth, the tragedy to which we have grown accustomed. We wake up to news of barbaric Israeli raids against Lebanese civilians, then we hear of the mass arrests of Palestinians and the destruction of homes and closure of territories... Our reactions have become so dulled that we are no longer surprised at our own reactions."
(Amin Mohamed Amin, 23 August)

Al-Gomhuria: "There are, undoubtedly, many reasons for the US indifference to Israeli behaviour against the Palestinians. Washington knows very well that what Israel is doing to Yasser Arafat and the Palestinians verges on total oppression. The Jewish lobby is gaining more ground daily and is becoming harder to oppose. It has been said that this lobby was behind the Paula Jones lawsuit against President Clinton. The day before yesterday a court ruled that Paula's legal action against Clinton would continue and this means that Clinton will have to make an unprecedented court appearance at the end of May. With the Jews exercising such influence, will the president be able to resist or oppose their policies?"
(Samir Ragab, 24 August)

Al-Usbooe: "How is it that *Al-Shaab* got so brazen all of a sudden? How could it call the minister of interior a thief and a gangster? The paper is still being published and the chief editor working unhampered. His telephone has not been disconnected and his car tires have not been slashed. There must be something behind this. There must be support from someone. This is what is being said everywhere. People are simply not used to such a level of criticism in the Egyptian press. Normally, such a situation could only have one of two outcomes: either the chief editor ends up in prison or the minister gets relieved of his post and put on trial. From the very beginning, *Al-Shaab* has sought to neutralise the presidency by suggesting that Mubarak did not sympathise with either side."
(Mustafa Bakri, 25 August).

Al-Arabi: "We are not party to *Al-Shaab*'s campaign against the interior minister, but we are not neutral either. There are several points we would like to make: first, the right to question the ministers is perfectly legal. The public is entitled to know the truth, particularly as the documents produced by *Al-Shaab* are quite damning. Second, journalists should not be penalised because of their opinions. Third, the minister has been late in responding to the accusations. It is wrong to link the press campaign to any banned organisation because this takes the issue out of its context and is a form of intimidation. Fourth, it is curious that among those who oppose the press campaign are businessmen who take out full-page advertisements in *Al-Ahram* to defend the minister, making it look as if the Ministry of Interior, rather than the ministries of industry and investment, is responsible for their welfare. Fifth, the case has become a top public issue and, therefore, deserves a speedy solution."
(Abdallah Imam, 25 August)

Rose El-Youssef: "I fear that *Al-Shaab*'s press campaign against the interior minister may get out of hand. The minister has denied the paper's allegations. The paper has in the past libelled the minister's sons and it is now determined to take on the minister. The fact that the office of the prosecutor-general is looking into the case, following a complaint from the minister, has done little to dampen the paper's zeal... *Al-Shaab* should realise that its chances in court are slim because of its reliance on rumours and unsubstantiated reports."
(Adel Hamouda, 25 August)

Al-Akhbar: "What has been taking place recently in the occupied Palestinian lands and south Lebanon can only be called a war, an undeclared war, a war that Israel can neither deny nor justify. It comes at a time when the Arabs continue to talk about peace, a just, comprehensive settlement. This talk has been going on for so long that it now completely meaningless and cannot be taken seriously."
(Mahmoud Abdel-Moneim Mourad, 25 August)

Compiled by Amira Howeidy



Will she or won't she? US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, true to form, is making her position clear. The fixed glare, the rounded jowls, the stiff hair all seem to convey the message that she will take the hard line on the Palestinian issue. There is something of the Iron Lady in the set of her jaw. But one note of ambiguity remains, expressed in the asymmetrical lines of her features: will she visit the region or not? As the world waits with bated breath, Dennis Ross offers the bait. Who will bite first?



Close up

Salama A. Salama

Joining the club

Israel has assumed the right to monopolise the possession and development of nuclear weapons; unlike the rest of the world community, however, it carries out research and testing without international supervision by international agencies qualified to monitor the use of extremely dangerous miliary technologies. It also considers that it is its prerogative to seek assistance from and to deal with the nuclear scientists who fled the Soviet Union following the collapse of the USSR. It has also helped itself to the right of preventing other countries in the Middle East from developing nuclear capabilities without its prior authorisation.

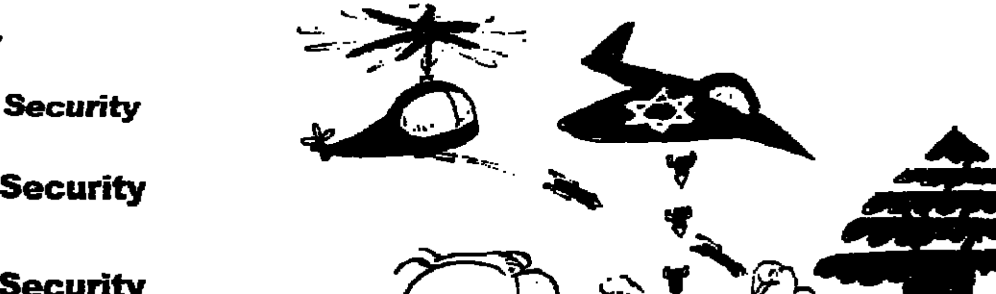
It is both remarkable and disconcerting that Israel, by placing itself on a par with the five major nuclear powers, who are exempt from the plethora of international restrictions on nuclear proliferation, has been able to secure international recognition of sorts as a member of that closed club. Israel is now entitled to act as the US does. It has asked China not to sell nuclear facilities to Iran, and Netanyahu has declared that China pledged it would not do so. It also brought pressure to bear on Moscow to freeze its cooperation agreement with Iran for the construction of a nuclear reactor, and to refrain from selling arms to Syria, and has apparently obtained similar concessions that Moscow will not sell any equipment that can be used to develop nuclear capabilities of any sort to any country in the Middle East.

Israel is now acting as though it were in charge of establishing and enforcing the criteria for the regulation of the military situation in the Middle East. It can now exercise effective leverage on Russia by threatening to impose economic sanctions and freeze cooperation projects signed between the two countries.

This development comes at a time when Israel shows no sign of willingness to downscale its huge arsenal of nuclear weaponry; at a time, moreover, when it seems to be stepping up the pace of nuclear research and armament, in order to maintain its nuclear superiority in the region and internationally. All this is taking place without the slightest evidence of international supervision, and in the total absence of any opposition on the part of the Arab countries. Israel, of course, enjoys the full support of the US, which has successfully resisted all attempts to bring Israel into the fold of the international nuclear non-proliferation treaty, and has strongly opposed Egypt's efforts in this direction.

Dreamers and realists alike may consider that there is nothing new in this situation. The bitter truth, that has not been taken into account by the quiescent, submissive Arab countries, is that Israel's strategic and political investment in its nuclear capabilities has grown increasingly brazen and challenging. Israel's efforts to impose the status quo are not limited to the Palestinian problem, or Israeli occupation of the Golan and south Lebanon. They also apply to the balance of power in the region, especially as pertains to military capabilities, which Israel now seeks to control.

Why, then, did the Arabs so readily agree to sign the non-proliferation treaty? India, in contrast, stuck to its guns and refused to sign treaties limiting its chemical and nuclear capabilities. It would be more logical for the Arab states, led by Egypt, to undermine Israel's attempts to impose a monopoly on nuclear power. If the Arab states cannot develop nuclear weapons, they can, at least, prevent Israel from owning them. This means that the Arab countries must reconsider their relations with Iran, with a view to coordinating their endeavours with those of the new government in Tehran, and also with other forces possessing nuclear capabilities, such as India and Pakistan.



Soapbox

Making movies

The demand for a complete reform of the cinema industry has been overshadowed by the issue of a statute to regulate investment incentives. This policy will benefit neither the industry, nor businessmen, nor even the government, which people now associate with the idea of radical reform.

The establishment of large corporations, clearly, should come after the reform of working conditions in the cinema industry. Capital usually flows into profit-making projects. But our government is tailoring investment incentives to fit an oligopoly with a working capital of LE200 million.

Is it in the interest of businessmen to appear hostile to those working in the very industry where they hope to do business? Hardly. They should heed the Buddhist precept to "make the soil love the tree before you plant it".

The statute stipulates that the company benefiting from investment incentives must engage in all aspects of film production. Is this a realistic condition? Can the market absorb hundreds of facilities which may serve companies that have not yet been established?

Large corporations which import advanced technology will raise the standards ofcinema. Nevertheless, this does not preclude the existence of small independent companies. The friendly businessmen planning to invest in cinema would be well advised to remember that it will do them no good if all their future colleagues regard them as sharks.

We definitely need the financial and planning abilities of businessmen, but they, too, need us — those who make the films.



This week's Soapbox speaker is an Egyptian cinema director.

Raafat El-Mihi

Dragging feet of clay

Can the US save the peace process? **Hassan Nafaa** doubts it

On 6 August, US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright delivered a long-awaited speech on the situation in the Middle East. Some observers hoped the occasion would mark the beginning of vital and energetic US efforts to extricate the peace process from its current stalemate, due to Israeli intransigence, particularly after the arrival of Binyamin Netanyahu to power at the head of a Likud government. Unfortunately, the speech reflected such a pro-Israeli bias that one Jewish columnist for a major American newspaper remarked that the passages concerning Israeli security could well have been written by Netanyahu himself. The fact that the speech also alluded to clear discrepancies between US and Israeli policy, however, was to some a sign of hope that the US could still be an impartial mediator capable of reviving the moribund peace process if the administration summoned the resolve to do so.

No sooner had Albright finished her speech than special envoy Dennis Ross packed his bags and headed for the Middle East. His mission this time was very specific: to activate joint Israeli-Palestinian security efforts. So obsessed had she become with the security question that the secretary of state insisted that some progress be made on this front before she agreed to visit the region. Indeed, Dennis Ross was able to secure the Palestinian Authority's agreement to resume the operations of PA-Israeli Security Coordination Joint Committee, which would be monitored by a representative from the CIA. This commitment was sufficient for the secretary of state to announce officially that she would undertake a visit to the region in September in order to renew attempts to salvage the peace process.

It is remarkable that Dennis Ross was able to obtain the Palestinian Authority's assent to resume joint security activities without having to offer in return any Israeli concession with regard to lifting the blockade and alleviating the starvation campaign the Israeli government is waging against the Palestinian people. Evidently, Ross's strategy was to pressure the weaker party rather than make any attempt to extract concessions from the Israelis.

Naturally, America's friends in the Arab world have arguments ready at hand to justify the US's prejudice. This is a tactical move, they argue, in order to reassure the Israeli government and its many friends in Congress as well as US financial and media circles that the administration is concerned with Israel's security. This emphasis is essential, they say, in order to keep these forces from acting in concert to abort the official American initiative from the outset. Nor do the friends of the PA lack excuses to justify its one-sided concessions. The PA had no alternative but to block Israel's continued attempts to cast the blame on the Palestinians for the current debacle in the peace process, they argue. Regardless of the validity of these arguments, however, the fact that US pressure was exercised against the PA alone is deeply disturbing and casts doubts on the US's ability to promote a lasting settlement.

The Palestinian concessions will allow Israel to impose heavy security responsibilities that the PA cannot fulfil without sacrificing the shreds of credibility it retains among the Palestinian people. In light of Israel's past behaviour, this is most likely the course the current government will take. In fact, Israel is reported to have urged that Albright postpone her visit, originally scheduled for the end of August, in order to exert even more pressure on the PA, thus forcing it to take specific security measures: a massive campaign of arrests against the Palestinian factions who oppose the current settlement process and a dismantling of the Hamas infrastructure. Such actions would supposedly demonstrate the PA's good intentions toward security cooperation.

If these pressures are effective, the Israeli government will not only have succeeded in transforming the PA into a police force for Israeli security and an instrument of repression against the Palestinian people, it will have ignited the fuse of a Palestinian civil war. The pressures may also provide additional incentive to those elements that favour terrorist action as a means of influencing the course of the peace process. Albright's visit can then be deterred indefinitely and the new American initiative will be aborted before it begins. The extremist forces in Israel, foremost among which is the current Likud government, and the forces of extremism on the other side, will then see their interests converge miraculously.

The difficulties inherent in the current situation are compounded by the fact that, by all accounts, Madeleine Albright's knowledge of the intricacies of the Arab-Israeli conflict is severely restricted and her experience of the region is virtually nil. This diminishes the probabilities that her initiative will be successful. There is no indication that her visit will include Syria or that the US has any kind of vision of how negotiations can be resumed on the other deadlocked tracks. Simultaneously, it appears that the US secretary of state is adamant that the MENA IV conference, scheduled to be held in Doha in November, be included on the agenda of her visit. It is not unlikely, therefore, that her tour of the region will include visits to Saudi Arabia and the Gulf, where she will pressure these countries' governments to send high-level officials to the conference. If this proves true, the American initiative will also succeed in giving official sanction to Syria's isolation so that, even if some opening permits for a resumption of negotiations on the Palestinian track, ensuing complications on the other tracks will impede prospects of a comprehensive settlement in the long run.

It appears that, if the US administration continues on this course, the most Albright's visit will accomplish, if it takes place at all, is to reach arrangements that might permit for a resumption the Palestinian-Israeli dialogue, with no serious guarantees as to the nature of the solution. It may also contribute to alleviating the general level of tension in the area in order to provide a more favourable climate for the Doha conference. If tensions do abate, however, the truce will be temporary, and the situation will deteriorate as soon as the recalcitrant core issues of the Middle East conflict return once more to the fore.

The American approach to the peace process is structurally flawed in several respects. If the administration fails to rectify these flaws, it will be impossible to reach an equitable and lasting peace.

First, the current approach lacks clear terms of reference unanimously agreed upon by all parties. Supposedly, UN Resolution 242 and the principle of land for peace provide the underlying points of reference. On the surface, this is true. At closer inspection, however, they are elusive. Resolution 242 has been and remains open to very divergent interpretations. The Arabs stress the need for Israel to withdraw from every inch of land occupied since the 1967 War, underscoring the stipulation in the preamble that states that no power may seize the land of others by force of arms or warfare. The Israelis, on the other hand, refer to the paragraphs of the resolution which affirm the right of all nations in the region to safe and recognised boundaries. For 30 years Israel has been saying that secure boundaries do not necessarily mean the pre-1967 boundaries, but should be delineated through direct negotiations.

In addition, all the attempts to amend Resolution 242 in more explicit defence the Palestinian cause, the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination and an independent state — all of which lie at the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict — have failed. It has been said that the principle of land for peace, which served as the basis for convening the Madrid conference, clarified the ambiguity of Resolution 242 and reaffirmed the need for Israel to withdraw from all the territories it occupied during and since the 1967 War. This, too, may be true in formalistic and legal terms. In practical terms, however, Israel has never signed a document recognising this principle as the basis for a political settlement. At no time before, during or after the Madrid conference has Israel wavered from its interpretation of Resolution 242. Nor has any Israeli official, from either the Labour or the Likud parties, issued a statement acknowledging that the principle of land for peace implies the Israeli withdrawal from all lands it occupied in 1967.

At any rate, the Israeli position has no internationally recognised legal basis. The point here, however, is the fact that the current process lacks clear and undisputed terms of reference. The fact that the principles commonly acknowledged to constitute a point of reference are open to such divergent interpretations can only serve to complicate the settlement process. This ambiguity is no coincidence. It benefits Israel, since the settlement process reflects the balance of forces on the ground, regardless of principles of justice and legality, and provides Israel with every opportunity to turn local, regional and international balances of power to its advantage.

The second structural flaw in the negotiating process is the lack of a deadline for the negotiating process. The "peace process" did not begin with the Madrid conference, it began directly in the wake of the October 1973 war. President Sadat's visit to Jerusalem in 1977, the Camp David Accords of 1978, the Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty of 1979, the Madrid conference of 1991, the Oslo agreements of 1994 and the subsequent agreements were all waystations on a long and circuitous route. From the outset Israel wanted this process to be slow and gradual so that it could remain firmly under its direction. Consequently, Israel's focus on procedural aspects overshadowed its concern for content. It refused categorically that the settlement process should take place through a comprehensive international conference and was adamant on holding separate negotiations with the individual Arab parties. In fact, whenever the Arabs sought to coordinate their positions over any of the steps in the process, Israel accused them of teaming up against "peace". Frequently, too, Israel would justify slowing the pace of the process on the grounds that it needed time to "digest" the developments that were taking place at such a heady pace.

Israel has adopted a negotiating style unprecedented in the history of resolving international crises. On one hand, it typifies the behaviour of the victor who seeks to impose his conditions on the weaker party. On the other hand, the Arabs refuse to act out defeat in a satisfactory way. The overall balance of forces in the Arab-Israeli struggle has, over the long run, given the Arabs many other alternatives to submission to Israeli demands. This fact renders a compromise solution virtually impossible as long as Israel insists on negotiating from the standpoint of the victor. While the Arabs for many reasons are now willing to make a historical settlement based on the division of Palestinian land so as to accommodate two distinct national entities, the Israelis do not evince such a sense of political maturity. On the contrary, they continue to believe that even a compromise settlement would constitute at least a partial defeat of the Zionist enterprise at a time when this enterprise seems to be at the height of its power.

Until these structural weaknesses in the peace process are remedied, any attempt to extricate it from its current deadlock will result at best in a temporary alleviation of tensions. In other words, a lasting peace in the Middle East can only be reached if three conditions are met: the formulation of clear and undisputed terms of reference; the establishment of a clear deadline for the conclusion of the bilateral and multilateral negotiations; the parties' conviction of the reality that, since it is impossible for any of them to achieve absolute victory, they must all demonstrate the good will necessary to negotiate and be prepared to take difficult decisions toward that end.

These conditions are by no means self-evident. Nor will they be met unless Israeli society undergoes certain profound modifications in its patterns of cognition and unless the pattern of US-Israeli relations witnesses an equally profound change. Since it is highly unlikely that such changes will take place in the near future, we should not entertain great illusions about what Albright will accomplish on her visit to the region.

The writer is a professor of political science at Cairo University.

'Why all the gunpowder?'

In the final part of his discussion of the new Islamic discourse, **Abdelwahab Elmessiri** suggests that a project for reform may emerge from the rubble of the encounter with the West

Had Sheikh Mohamed Abduh's experience with Western modernity been different, he would have hesitated before proposing his project to bring Islam up to date. In 1830, Sheikh Rifa'a El-Tahtawi, whose infatuation with Western civilisation is well known, was in Paris. That same year, French cannons were reducing unsuspecting Algerian towns and villages to piles of rubble. Sheikh El-Tahtawi, however, could see only the bright lights of Paris, and heard nothing but the urbane and sophisticated rhythms of Western modernity. The Algerian sheikhs, on the other hand, who were being subjected to a brutal colonial attack using the most sophisticated technology available at the time, could only see raging flames and hear the racket of bombs. One of these sheikhs was once told that the French troops had actually come to Algeria to spread Western civilisation and modernity. He asked: "But why have they brought all this gunpowder?".

Like this Algerian sheikh, the bearers of the new Islamic discourse smelled the stench of gunpowder, saw the flames, heard the racket of cannons and watched the hooves of the French soldiers' horses trample their lives. The gunpowder was everywhere, for it was used to destroy or exterminate everything in the *colons'* path, then and later. Bombs, missiles, biological and nuclear weapons, became part of everyday life. Huge budgets were allocated to the production or purchase of these weapons. In fact, the military is the most important industry of our enlightened, rational times: homo sapiens, for the first time in his long history, now allocates more funds to the production of weapons of mass destruction than to the production of food.

The old Islamic discourse was neither unique nor isolated in its advocacy of Western modernity; it was, in a sense, part of the general outlook that prevailed in the third world from the beginning of this century. Efforts were directed at catching up with the West and competing with it on its own terms. The liberal trend called for the adoption of the modern Western outlook in its totality, "both the bitter and the sweet". The Marxists suggested that the peoples of the third world could enter the promised land of Western modernity through the gates of social justice. The Islamists, in their turn, imagined it would be possible to adopt the modern Western outlook or, rather, adapt to it. All these trends and movements, religious or secular, irrespective of ideological inclinations and social or ethnic backgrounds, turned the West into an implicit, ultimate point of reference.

As a result of this attitude to Western modernity, the Islamic world-view retreated and lost its comprehensive nature. Instead of seeking to elaborate an Islamic frame of reference for Muslims in the modern age, the issue became how to "Islamise" certain aspects of Western modernity. The Islamisation process, in most cases, consisted of "omitting" those aspects of Western modernity deemed *haram* (prohibited) by Islam, without any addition or innovation, emphasising the *halal* (permissible) aspects of Western modernity, and searching for aspects of the Islamic world-view analogous to features of Western modernity. This inevitably meant the atrophy of those aspects of the Islamic world-view that *encountered no analogy within the modern Western* world-view. Ironically, it is those aspects that consitute the very essence, the source of specificity of the Islamic world-view.

The bearers of the new Islamic discourse do not have the same fascination with Western modernity. Actually, a radical critique of Western modernity is one of their main points of departure. They are neither unique nor isolated in their critique, for they do not differ from many of the thinkers and political movements in the third world today who are attempting to develop new forms of modernity, nor from many important thinkers in the West who are critical of Western modernity. Marxism included a critique of modernity; it strongly influenced the Frankfurt School, which further deepened the critique. Romahtic literature was also in part a protest against Western modernity. The protest of modernist literature, however, is even more profound and radical: it tries to represent the reified world of modernity, where the chain of causality is either completely broken or so petrified that complete determinism is imposed. The theatre of the absurd is part of this Western protest against the dead-end into which Western modernity has led humanity.

More recently, religious fundamentalism has emerged as a populist extension of this intellectual trend. All of these trends, in one way or another, show an increasing, *if implicit, realisation that* Western modernity strips man of his specificity and subverts his human essence.

The new Islamic discourse is only part of a wider global trend. The perception of the crisis of Western modernity has taken different forms in different parts of the world. In the Muslim world, the perception has taken an Islamic form. Nevertheless, the critique of modernity presented by the new Islamic discourse is characteristically different from other critiques. For one thing, it recognises and emphasises the inextricable ties between Western modernity and Western imperialism. Imperialism, after all, was our first encounter with modernity; Zionist settler colonialism in Palestine is but the most recent form this encounter has taken. Furthermore, unlike the Western critique of modernity, which is nihilistic and pessimistic, the Islamic critique is optimistic by virtue of the fact that it proposes a project for reform.

The writer is professor emeritus at Ain Shams University.

A lifetime's project

Mahmoud El-Wardani reviews the life and achievements of Sheikh Mahmoud Mohamed Shaker, who died earlier this month



On 7 August the scholar Sheikh Mahmoud Mohamed Shaker died aged almost 90. Thus ended a lifetime dedicated to the service of the Arabic language.

Sheikh Shaker was born in Alexandria in 1909 to an academic family. The son of the vice-rector of Al-Azhar, he had already read *Kitab Al-Aghani* and *Lisan Al-Arab* before finishing his secondary school studies. At university he was a student, though not a necessarily happy one, of Taha Hussein. During the course of a lecture by Hussein on pre-Islamic poetry, Shaker made a violent outburst about his professor's methodology which resulted in his expulsion from Hussein's classes. Undaunted, Shaker decided to leave university altogether and emigrated to Hejaz in 1928 where he established and ran a primary school.

He remained for only a year, after which he returned and started publishing articles and poems in magazines and newspapers. In 1938 Sheikh Shaker obtained the licence to publish *Al-Usour* (The Ages) magazine, but after three issues it stopped. Yet Shaker continued to contribute to newspapers until 1952, after which he devoted his energies to writing books and editing the classics. Among his many publications are *Abatil Wa Asmar*, *Al-Mutanabi*, the poetry collection *Al-Qous Wal-Azraa*, apart from his editing of sixteen volumes of Al-Tabari's Qur'anic exegesis, of Abdel-Qader El-Gurgani's *Kitab Al-I'jaz* and *Asrar Al-Balagha* and Zubayr Ibn Bakkar's *Gamharat Nissab Quraysh Wa Akhbariha*, among many others.

Sheikh Shaker's relations with the Nasser regime were at best tense. Twice imprisoned for his alleged connections with the Muslim Brotherhood, he opted for a reclusive life dedicated exclusively to literary projects. Nevertheless, recognition did eventually come his way. Sheikh Shaker was to receive the State Award of Merit, followed by the King Faisal Prize — not to mention the love and respect of the many disciples who sought him out at the weekly literary salon he held at his house.

The volume *Risala Fil-Tariq Ila Thaqafatina* is representative of Sheikh Shaker's ideas and methodology. Originally written as the introduction to *Al-Mutanabi*, it was first published separately in 1991 in Al-Hilal's monthly series. Sheikh Shaker begins by establishing his methodology which, he says, helped him survive the corruption of the literary world and resulted in his decision to leave university after his dispute with Taha Hussein.

In *Risala Fil-Tariq Ila Thaqafatina*, Sheikh Shaker traces the decline of our cultural life to two historical events. The first is the Crusades, which came after a period in which Islamic culture had spread from China to Africa and Andalusia. This was the civilisation that for two centuries the Crusaders sought to eradicate before finally acknowledging defeat. The second event was the fall of Constantinople to Mohamed Al-Fatih in 1453, which caused Europe to step up its resistance.

In face of such a wide-spread Islamic civilisation, Europe realised its only weapon was to quarry knowledge from Muslim scholars and scientists, particularly in the fields of algebra, mathematics and medicine. This was also a time when Arabic books were pillaged and taken back to the West, the moment which witnessed the insidious beginnings of Orientalism, missionary activities in the East and imperialism. Thus, while Arab civilisation began to decline, Europe was formulating its humanist project, one that was, in fact, premised on rapacity and bloodshed.

Such are the main ideas that characterise the seven-decade project of Sheikh Shaker. Interestingly, some of his conclusions are identical to those reached much later by Edward Said, though the Palestinian thinker's approach could not be more different. Nor have Sheikh Shaker's ideas dated; many are still relevant today, though one would take issue with the almost exclusive precedence he gives to religion and language, to the parameters he sets for the relationship between self and other, and to the cultural isolation that his ideas, if applied, would impose.

When all is said and done, a noble fighter for Arabic culture has died. We must be grateful then, that up until the last minutes of his life Sheikh Shaker continued to be productive and giving.

Music

Joy beans

David Blake savours some end of summer treats

Said El-Artist: Open Air Theatre, Cairo Opera House; 19 August



Said El-Artist

Happiness is suspect — it's out, even rude, but joy abounds. Be joyful, dance, and the world dances with you. Even 1997 has to come to terms with joy.

And Said the percussive artist generates joy in armfuls: he exudes it like perfume — straightforward, simple, uncomplicated joy. He asks for nothing but love. That's like happiness, so best to scratch it and settle for joy. At least he wants you to be joyful too, though that, inevitably, depends on your needs. If you need the Mozart *Magic Flute* to dispel your summer city blues, then you're out of luck. If you can take percussion in the Egyptian folkloric manner, then Said is your dish for the evening.

He is a dish and so is his family. His show is the entire family, like a proper flamenco display in which age isn't funny, is merely there to be accepted along with the weather. So on stage there are Said's aunts and uncles, a wife presumably, brothers and sisters, and for sure, sons. Each plays his part.

The performance is percussion. You may not like percussion; it's an acquired taste *au nature*. But Said's is a percussive symphony in one movement, with stops along the way to introduce members of the family. Each is given an entrance build up, they join in the performance, and at the finish make a most dignified exit. He makes a sign: that's it, you've done your bit, now get off and allow the aunts to make their entrance.

Everyone plays a kind of *tabla* — low, high, big and booming, or just plain ordinary *tabla*, which everyone knows. The rhythms are varied, like the summer breezes blowing around the theatre they twist and then scud off into the city lights behind the theatre.

Said El-Artist weaves his own charms. He's never boring and, in spite of the limited sound of the *tabla*, the musical part is lively and joyful.

The beginning — 22 young men and four girls bound on stage. All are tall, almost identical: slim, easy-going, but firmly rooted. They look like where they come from: a cross section of the cities, towns and villages of the land. The girls are in colourful dresses, just dresses, not cabaret finery, nothing glitzy.

Each man is dressed in flowing white shirt, immaculate but informal: black trousers, *La Boheme* bow tie and, to top the lot, a deep scarlet tarboosh. As they rush across the stage in a line stretching the width of the theatre, the effect is sudden and electrifying. They look like characters from high style operetta. There is a lot to be said for the tarboosh. It is hard for men to look absurd or pompous in it; on the contrary, it makes them look rather joyful and dashing.

Said El-Artist himself is in total black and not highly groomed. He too looks relaxed. No time is wasted, not a word spoken throughout the show. No party games with the audience. These people are probably the first in their line as a theatrical show. There's nothing falsely "arty" about Said, he's not trying anything grandiose or pretentious, he knows his work, he is proud. He, the artist, is no star display; the family members are also artists surrounding him. Said is quite honest: that's me, me out there, we are all lovely and unique. Flamenco family again: he is the centre of a united group who all work unselfishly together to give pleasure to those who have come. He could, he and his family, be elevated to the level of symbolism. But there is no hint of superiority, merely pleasure at giving their own excellence. They don't need lighting effects or plastic smoke screens. They are there exuding their own special colour and it is for real. Said and his family are artists, like the ones painted by Lautrec and Degas.

The things they perform are named to ease the almost inexorable sound of non-stop percussion. We hear lace-like tracery of noises to show how tough and resilient is the human hand — African thunder drums followed by relaxed room music for dancing. The orchestra imitates Tuscan church bells and Andalusian castanets. The climax comes with the introduction of the family aunts, ladies of stature and dignity who could be awesome: instead, they are slyly humorous. Very mature, they enter, make their obeisance to the audience and then sit. And when ladies like this sit, everything sits.

If you ever wondered whether ladies percuss, wonder no more: they can and they do. The aunts' strength and accuracy equals that of the boys. They received a tremendous ovation. Moved no doubt, they sail off stage, their colourful clothes blowing beautifully in the wind. After the aunts, the performance settles into the closing movement of the *tabla* symphonic variations.

Said finally introduces what appear to be, one by one, his three sons. He brings them on for a family bonding because the audience is in on the story. He stands aside and, to the accompaniment of the 22 men, each boy plays a section of the finale. Through the evening, there has been nothing snide, no cute soliciting of the audience, no trace of Disney. In the West, the three boys would have been small, salacious little monsters. With Said, they did their piece as a part of the group in a last burst of percussive energy.

Said El-Artist and the troupe are really what theatre is about. Shakespeare and Moliere said it. Said shows it.

Takht music; Open Air Theatre, Cairo Opera House; 21 August

Good-bye summer, but not forever. So goes the old song. After the bright glare and flash of Said El-Artist, any singing is bound to be a relapse unless it is absolutely, maniacally operatic.

These *takht* singers were all good, but there is nothing like a dash of something grand to liven up such a theatrical party. After the routine overture a lady in black chiffon, Ahlam Ahmed, appeared. She sang two songs by Farid El-Atrash. Life and times have not been kind to these songs. Furnishings have changed drastically. There must be singers who know how to manipulate them in the 1997 mood. One of the songs, "Vienna Nights", was written for Asmahan, she of the highly spiced legend. There was no paprika in this song. It should have been done with a zonky, kitsch mix, suggesting dark doings on a Nile of long ago. The long, threatening *ostinatos* dropping into low notes were no help. We needed a generous dollop of swoon which we did not get.

Then came Mustafa Ahmed, a tall, opulent male singer in a dashing green jacket. His clothes went with his dark, powerful voice and erotic manner. His baritone was vibrant. The audience loved him. He knew how to put over his two Abdel-Wahab songs with the right atmosphere: the last days of whichever empire suits you. Each phrase of the song was gratefully applauded by the audience. Some old songs never die.

Then came Sahar Nagi, a splendid vision in rich cream outfit. Oh Amneris where are you. She's right here in the swimming pool open air space of the Cairo Opera. What a voice! And what poise. She sang songs by Abdel-Wahab and El-Sonbati. She goes deep into her songs, is serious about expressing them. The *kanun* and flutes added point to her singing. As the song develops, she becomes a mourner, a requiem figure. Her few gestures are precise. There is no cabaret about her. The voice is huge. When it rises to a climax — will she get it? She does, and there are vibrations and force. It finishes. A great figure leaves the stage without a gesture. Merely the applause and she's gone.

Dress is important to singers. They need special outfits. Acts of revelation, not exactly dresses. Azza Nasr plumped for spangles. Not too many, but it was an operatic dress for an operatic voice with *coloratura* ability shown in these songs. The songs: by Abdel-Wahab and El-Atrash. The voice: big soprano type. The physique: a true diva. She began nervously, then picked up and delivered rich tones.

To finish Mohsen Farouk, tenor, gave two songs, one, again, by Abdel-Wahab; the other, by Zakaria Ahmed. Nice songs, suited to the singer's *legato*. He has a trained voice, a lyric tenor easily floated, romantic and nostalgic.

These splendid singers must be accepted and enjoyed on their own terms. They are big, vocally, and the *takht* reveals many — even operatic — possibilities.

Listings

EXHIBITIONS

Gamal Gad Mielka
Exhibition Hall, Al-Ahram Building, El-Galaa St, Boulaq. Tel 5786100. Daily 9am-10pm.
Recent paintings and sculpture by an Egyptian artist now resident in Italy.

Milton Glaser
Sony Gallery, Main Campus, American University in Cairo, Mohamed Mahmoud St. Tel 357 5424. Daily exc Fri & Sat, 9am-12pm & 6pm-9pm. Until 15 Sept.
Posters and book covers, store designs and toy creations, magazine formats and logotypes are on display at the artist's first exhibition in the Middle East.

Valparaiso
Cervantes Institute for Spanish Culture, Alexandria annex, 101 El-Horreya Avenue, Alexandria.
An exhibit of lithographs, postcards and photographs.

Collective Exhibition
Espace Gallery, 1 El-Sherifein St, Downtown. Tel 393 1699. Daily 10am-2pm & 6pm-9pm; Fri 6pm-9pm. Until 20 Sept.
A retrospective display of works by Assem Sharaf, Dina El-Gharib, Hassaan Ali Ahmed, Hazem El-Mestekawi, Hisham El-Zeini, Hussein Sharif, Mohamed Abdel-Moneim, Omar El-Fayoumi and Sherif Abdel-Badie, all of whom held exhibitions at the gallery during the last season.

Group Show
Donia Gallery, 20 Abdel-Aziz Gawish St, Doctors' Tower, 4th floor, Bab El-Louq. Tel 355 8367. Daily 12pm-10pm.
Works by Hamed Nada, Adham Wanli, Hosny El-Banani, Seif Wanli, Fatma Rifaat, Mohamed Nagui and Zakaria El-Zeini among others.

Summer Collection
Khan El-Maghraby Gallery, 18 El-Mansour Mohamed St, Zamalek. Tel 340 3349. Daily exc Fri, 10.30am-2pm & 5pm-10pm. Until the end of Sept.
Works by Tahiya Halim, Abdel-Wahab Morsi, Salem Salah, George Bahgory, Hassan Abdel-Fattah, among others.

Group Exhibition
Mashrabiya Gallery, 8 Champollion St, Downtown. Tel 578 4494. Daily 5pm-10pm. Until the end of Sept.
Works by over 20 artists, including George Bahgouri, Mohamed Abla, Salah Hassouna, Xavier Puigmarti, Esmat Dawistashi and Aziz El-Hihi.

Suzanne Mubarak Children's Museum
34 Abu Bakr El-Seddiq St, Heliopolis. Tel 249 9915. Daily exc Mon, 9am-2pm.

The Museum of Mr and Mrs Mohamed Mahmoud Khalil
1 Kafour El-Akhshid St, Dokki. Tel 336 2376. Daily exc Mon, 10am-6pm.
Egypt's largest collection of nineteenth century European art, amassed by the late Mahmoud Khalil and his wife, includes works by Courbet, Van Gogh, Gauguin, and Rodin and a host of impressionist works, housed in the villa once belonging to the Khalils and converted into a museum with little, if any, expense spared. There are also a number of excellent orientalist works.

Egyptian Museum
Tahrir Sq, Downtown. Tel 575 4319. Daily exc Fri, 8am-5pm; Fri 9am-11.15am & 1pm-3pm.
The world's largest collection of Pharaonic and Ptolemaic treasures, including massive granite statues and the smallest household objects used by the Ancient Egyptians, along with, of course, the controversial mummies room. A perennial must.

Coptic Museum
Mar Girgis, Old Cairo. Tel 362 8766. Daily exc Fri, 9am-4pm; Fri 9am-11am & 1pm-3pm.
Founded in 1910, the museum houses a distinguished collection of Coptic art and artefacts, including textiles, manuscripts, icons and architectural features in a purpose built structure in the heart of the Coptic city. Elegant, airy, and with pleasant garden cafe.

Islamic Museum
Port Said St, Ahmed Maher St, Bab El-Khalq. Tel 390 9930/390 1520. Daily exc Fri, 9am-4pm; Fri 9am-11.30am & 2pm-4pm.
A vast collection of Islamic arts and crafts including *mashrabiya*, lustreware ceramics, textiles, woodwork, coins and manuscripts drawn from Egypt's Fatimid, Ayyubid and Mameluke periods and from other countries in the Islamic world.

Museum of Modern Egyptian Art
Opera House Grounds, Gezira. Tel 340 6861. Daily exc Mon, 10am-1pm & 5pm-9pm.
A permanent display of paintings and sculpture charting the modern art movement in Egypt from its earliest pioneers to latest practitioners. A state of the art museum housing the contemporary art of the state.

Mohamed Nagui Museum
Château Pyramids, 9 Mahmoud Al-Guindi St, Giza.
A museum devoted to the paintings of Mohamed Nagui (1888-1956), the Alexandrian aristocrat who is considered one of the pioneers of the modern Egyptian art movement.

Mahmoud Mukhtar Museum
Tahrir St, Gezira. Daily exc Sun and Mon, 9am-1.30pm.
A permanent collection of works by the sculptor Mahmoud Mukhtar (d. 1934), whose granite monument to Saad Zaghloul stands near Qasr El-Nil Bridge, and whose Egypt Awakening became, somewhat belatedly, an icon of post revolutionary Egypt.

FILMS

Russian Films
Pushkin Centre for Russian Culture, 127 El-Tahrir St, Dokki. Tel 360 6371.
Russian and Egyptian film screenings every Monday at 7pm.

Treshol
Maulana Abul Kalam Azad Centre for Indian Culture, 37 Talaat Harb St, Downtown. Tel 392 5243. 28 August, 5pm.
With Amitab Bachchan.

Indian Cultural Festival for Children
The latest Indian films for children, clay modelling, floor designs, kite making, yoga, Hindustani music, exhibitions, books, documentaries, dolls, and more at the Integrated Care Society, Heliopolis. Until August. For more information, contact the Information Service of the Indian Embassy, 37 Talaat Harb St, Downtown. Tel 392 5243/ 392 5162/ 3927573.

Commercial cinemas change their programmes every Monday. The information provided is valid through to Sunday after which it is wise to check with the cinemas. Arabic films are seldom subtitled. For information, contact the venue.

El-Masir (Le Destin)
Odeon I, Abdel Hamid Said st., Downtown, Tel 575 8797. MGM, Kolleyat El-Nasr Sq, Maadi. Tel 352 3066. Daily 10am, 1pm, 3pm, 6pm & 9pm. Metro, 35 Talaat Harb St, Downtown. Tel 393 3897. Daily 10am, 1pm, 3pm, 6pm & 9pm. El-Salam, 65 Abdel-Hamid Badawi St, Heliopolis. Tel 293 1072. Daily 3.30pm, 6.30pm & 9.30pm. El-Haram, El-Haram St, Giza. Tel 385 8358. Daily 10am, 1pm, 3pm, 6pm & 9pm. Karim I, 15 Emadeddin St, Downtown. Tel 591 6095. Daily 10am, 1pm, 3pm, 6pm & 9pm. Normandy, 31 El-Ahram St, Heliopolis. Tel 258 0254. Daily 12.30pm, 3.30pm, 6.30pm & 9.30pm. Radio, 24 Talaat Harb St, Downtown. Tel 575 6562. Daily 10am, 1pm, 3pm, 6pm & 9pm. Tahrir, 112 Tahrir St, Dokki. Tel 335 4726. Daily 1pm, 3pm, 6pm, 9pm & Thur-Sat, midnight. Rivoli I, 26 July St, Downtown. Tel 575 5053. Daily 1pm, 3.30pm, 6.30pm 8pm & 10pm.
Youssef Chahine's latest mega-production: starring Nour El-Sherif, Leila Elwi, Mahmoud Hemeida, Safeiya El-Emari and a large, young, easthetically pleasing cast.

The Arrival
Ramsis Hilton, Corniche El-Nil St. Tel 574 7435. Daily 1.30pm, 330pm, 6.30pm, 9.30pm & midnight. Cosmos II, 12 Emadeddin St, Downtown. Tel 779 537. Daily 10am, 1pm, 3pm, 6pm & 9pm.
A new sci-fi with Charlie Sheen.

Double Team
Karim II, 15 Emadeddin St, Downtown. Tel 592 4830. Daily 10am, 1pm, 3pm, 6pm & 9pm.
With Jean-Claude Van Damme, Dennis Rodman and Mickey Rourke.

Ismailia Rayeh Gaey (Ismailia Back and Forth)
Cairo Sheraton, El-Galaa St, Giza. Tel 360 6081. Daily 10.30am, 1pm, 3pm, 6pm, 9pm & midnight. Lido, 23 Emadeddin St, Downtown. Tel 934 284. Daily 10am, 1pm, 3pm, 6pm & 9pm. Tiba II, Nasr City. Tel 262 9407. Daily 10.30am, 3.30pm, 6.30pm & 9.30pm.
With Hanan Tork, Khaled El-Nabawi, Mohamed Heneidi and singer Mohamed Fouad.

Liar Liar
Ramsis Hilton, Corniche El-Nil St. Tel 574 7435. Daily 1.30pm, 3.30pm, 6.30pm, 9.30pm & midnight.
For one day attorney Jim Carrey can only tell the truth.

'Awdat El-Ebn El-Dall (Return of the Prodigal Son)
Odeon II, Abdel Hamid Said St., Downtown, Tel 575 8797. Daily 10.30am, 1.30pm, 3.30pm, 6.30pm & 9.30pm.
Directed by Youssef Chahine, the film stars Hesham Selim, Mahmoud El-Meligui and Magda El-Roumi.

Eskenderiya... Leih (Alexandria... Why)
Odeon III, Abdel Hamid Said St., Downtown. Tel 575 8797. Daily 10.30am, 1.30pm, 3.30pm, 6.30pm & 9.30pm.
The third of Cinema Odeon's mini-film festival in honour of Youssef Chahine.

Hazzemni Ya...
Cinema Cairo, Saray El-Azbekiyya, downtown. Tel 574 5350. Daily 10am, 1pm, 3pm, 6pm & 9pm.
Fifi Abduh's belly-dancing stage hit transferred to the screen.

Toffaha (A Girl Called Apple)
Diana Palace, 17 El-Alfi St, Emadeddin, Downtown. Tel 924 727. Daily 10am, 1pm, 3pm, 6pm & 9pm.
With Leila Elwi and Magued El-Masri.

The Woman and the Cleaver
Tiba I, Nasr City. Tel 262 9407. Daily 10.30am, 3.30pm, 6.30pm & 9.30pm. Sphinx, Sphinx Sq, Mohandessin. Tel 346 4017. Daily 8pm. Miami, 38 Talaat Harb St, Downtown. Tel 574 5656. Daily noon, 3pm, 6pm & 9pm. Roxy, Roxy Sq, Heliopolis. Tel 258 0344. Daily 10am, 3pm, 6pm & 9pm. Cosmos I, 12 Emadeddin St, Downtown. Tel 779 537. Daily 10am, 1pm, 3pm, 6pm & 9pm. Rivoli II, 26 July St, Downtown. Tel 575 5053. Daily 1pm, 3.30pm, 6.30pm 8pm & 10pm.
Nabila Ebeid's latest venture involves the hacking to pieces of men.

MUSIC

National Arabic Music Ensemble
Open Air Theatre, Opera House, Gezira. Tel 341 2926. 28 August, 9pm.

Ismailia Festival Troupes
Open Air Theatre, Opera House, as above. 29 & 30 August, 9pm.

Yehia Khalil Jazz Ensemble
Open Air Theatre, Opera House, as above. 31 August, 9pm.

National Arabic Music Ensemble

THEATRE

Mama America
Qasr El-Nil Theatre, Qasr El-Nil St. Tel 575 0761. Sat & Sun 10pm, Mon 8pm.
Starring and directed by Mohamed Sobhi.

'A'elat Wanis (Wanis' Family)
Qasr El-Nil Theatre, as above. Weds & Thurs, 10pm, Fri 8pm.
Directed by Mohamed Sobhi and starring all the family members of the televised series.

Bahlool Fi Istambul
Hilton Ramsis Theatre, Hilton Ramsis annex, El-Galaa St. Tel 574 7435. Daily 10pm exc Fri, 8.30pm
With Samir Ghanem, Elham Shahin and Bothayna Rashwan.

Wada'an Ya Bakawat (Farewell Sirs)
George Abiad Hall, National Theatre, Ataba Sq. Tel 591 7783. Daily 10 pm.
With Hala Sedqi, Farouk El-Fishawi and Ezzat El-Alaylir; directed by Essam El-Sayed.

'Alam Guineadi (The World of Guineadi)
Small Hall, National Theatre, Ataba Sq. Tel 591 7783. Daily 9pm.
Musical directed Fawzi El-Melighi, score by Tarek Abbas.

El-Zaim (The Leader)
El-Haram Theatre, Pyramids Road, Giza. Tel 386 3952. Daily 10pm; Fri & Mon 8.30pm.
With Adel Imam; directed by Sherif Arafa.

El-Mahzala (The Farce)
El-Salam Theatre, Qasr El-Aini St. Tel 355 2484. Daily 9pm.
Youssef Idris play revived with Sherine, Omar El-Hariri and Tarek El-Dessouqi; directed by Shaker Abdel-Latif.

Ballo (Fanfare)
Madinet Nasr Theatre, Youssef Abbas St, Nasr City. Tel 402 0804. Daily 10pm; Fri & Mon 8.30pm.
A large crowd including Mahmoud El-Gundi, Salah El-Saadani, Samah Anwar and Ashraf Abdel-Baqi and a contingent of Russian ballet dancers; directed by Samir El-Asfouri.

Cromb, Zabadi (Cabbage, Yoghurt)
Radio, 24 Talaat Harb St, Downtown. Tel 575 6562. Daily 10pm, exc Mon & Fri, 8pm
Sayed Saleh, Ahmed Bedeir and legendary dancer Nagwa Fouad, directed by Essam El-Sayed.

Ta'm El-Kalam (The Taste of Words)
El-Talia, Ataba Square, Downtown. Tel 937 948. Daily 10 pm
Abdullah Mahmoud, Farouk Naguib and Manal Salama, directed by Hossam El-Din Saleh.

Malek Walla Kitabah (Heads or Tails)
Small Hall, El-Talia, Ataba Square, Downtown. Tel 937 948. Daily 8pm
Mustafa Saad directs Medhat Morsi and Salwa Osman in his own play.

Leila Foll (Jasmine Night)
Floating Theatre, Adjacent University Bridge, Manial. Tel 364 9516. For times check with venue.
Mahmoud El-Alfi directs Ola Rami, Emad Rashad, Mohamed Farid and singer Ahmed Ibrahim in a light musical.

LECTURES

Facts and Myths About Suicide
Fulbright Commission, 20 Gamaleddin Abul-Mahassen St, 2nd floor, Garden City. Tel 344 8200. 3 Sept, 7.30pm.
Lecture by Dr Isis Badawi, professor of clinical psychology.

All information correct at time of going to press. However, it remains wise to check with venues first, since programmes, dates and times are subject to change at very short notice.

Please send information to Listings, *Al-Ahram Weekly*, Galaa St, Cairo. Tel 5786064. Fax 5786089/833.

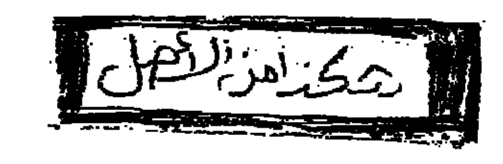
Compiled by **Injy El-Kashef**

Around the galleries

ALTHOUGH **the Nasser Museum of Modern Art, Port Said** does not boast a collection of its own, relying instead on loans from the collection of the Museum of Modern Egyptian Art in Cairo, a brief listing of a few of the works it hosts - over 70 - may entice the art lover to make a day trip to the decidedly historical city of Port Said. Some of the works on show deal with Port Saidian themes, like, for example, the brilliant **Abdel-Hadi El-Gazzar** depicting the digging of the Canal and the expressionistic engraving dealing with the war by **Farouk Shehata**. Others do not, but are none the less well worth the visit: an engraving of women in black by **Fathi Ahmed**, an abstract bas relief drawing by **Ahmed Nawar**, the abstract arabesque work of **Mustafa Mahdi**, the surrealist paintings by **Fatma El-Arargi** and **Ahmed Nabil**, respectively, and the statue of Egypt personified as a sitting woman by **Ahmed Amin**.

Beshara Farag Saad

Reviewed by **Nagwa El-Ashri**



What's in the bag?

Nehad Selaiha looks at what is on offer at CIFET this year and gives a few tips



The Story of Happiness and Grief and Love in the Garden, Ukraine

It is a mystery to me how Fawzi Fahmi finds the time to do all he does: I sometimes suspect he has struck a secret deal with heaven to grant him more hours per day than us ordinary mortals. Apart from his duties as head of a vast academic institution, the Academy of Arts, the far-reaching renovation and modernisation process he has set in motion there three years ago and the extensive planning, fund-raising and construction work it entails, including the building of the biggest and best-equipped audio-visual arts library in the Middle East, he performs his normal academic duties as professor of drama, writes articles about Egyptian society and culture for the Arabic *Al-Ahram*, annually organises the Cairo International Festival for Experimental Theatre, down to the minutest detail, and has recently been saddled (temporarily he hopes) with the onerous post of head of the Cultural Palaces Organisation which became vacant after the retirement of Hussein Mahran.

When I went to see him about the festival, I found his big, shabby office (desperately in need of redecoration), on the first floor of the Arabic Music Institute, in its habitual state of clutter and maddening confusion. Everywhere, on the shelves, floor, tables and sofas were piles of books, stacks of papers, files, brochures, video-tapes, academic dissertations, blueprints of construction plans and a miscellany of other objects including various trophies, paintings, statues and postcards. The man himself was not immediately visible; he sat at his desk, almost completely concealed, behind a huge mountain of papers so precariously balanced that it made me nervous to look at them. Fahmi, however, is a wizard at handling this mountain; he knows every layer of it, and it is positively stunning to see him whip out a document from the nethermost layer without the mountain showing so much as a slight tremor.

He proudly announced to me that CIFET's publications this year will number 16 translated books, nine of them dealing with women's and feminist theatre which is the theme of the central international seminar this year. It will be held on two days (2 and 3 September) at the Cairo Sheraton and hosts a number of interesting and distinguished female theatre figures from different generations, cultural backgrounds and fields of specialisation. The guests include directors (like Nayla Al-Atrash from Syria, Siham Nasser from Lebanon, Caroline Khalil, Abeer Ali and Zeinab Shimees from Egypt), actresses (like Raja Ben Ammar from Tunisia and Thuraya Gubran from Morocco), playwrights Awatif Al-Badr from Kuwait and Nadia El-Banhaw from Egypt, the famous Polish director and critic Zofia Kalineska, the British Karen Johnson and the Egyptian critic Abla El-Reweini. The famous British playwright Caryl Churchill was supposed to come but apologised at the last minute and so did the exciting American director Laura Farabough who was planning to bring along her newly formed Sponge group but could not finally raise the necessary funds. A great pity. Fortunately, however, two theatre personalities, of almost legendary fame, are going to be able to make it: the first is the Brazilian Augusto Boal whose experiments with the Arena Stage in Sao Paulo were genuinely original and ground-breaking, and whose book "Theatre of the Oppressed" (*Teatro de Oprimido*, 1974) has been described as "the most important theoretical work in the theatre in modern times" and continues to be a source of inspiration for experimental theatre artists all over the world. The second is Robert Brustein who was a revolutionary force in American theatre in the sixties when he headed the Drama School at Yale and was artistic director of the Yale Repertory Theatre, making it one of the leading collegiate ensembles in America, and who later fathered such seminal books as *The Theatre of Revolt*, *Seasons of Discontent*, *Revolution As Theatre*, *The Cultural Watch*, and *The Third Theatre*. Their participation in the seminar will definitely enrich it and give it added depth and vitality.

This central seminar, which is entitled 'Experimentation in Women's and Feminist Theatre', and plans to discuss in its four sessions feminist aesthetic theory, modes of writing, performance styles and methods of work and organisation, may well turn out to be the most exciting and rewarding event of the festival. Fahmi seems to sense that and has, therefore, dedicated his inaugural address to it, beginning it with a rousing sentence that sounds like a clarion call to action, and winding it up with a savage attack on Freud's interpretation of female sexuality. The opening sentence is worth quoting and establishes Fahmi as a staunch feminist. It says: "When 'man' first raised the issue of gender and began to ponder the nature and essence of 'womanhood', he did so alone, instituting himself as a kind of 'proxy' for all women, and producing out of his own fantasies and prejudices a series of fictional images and false representations." The implicit intent was "to establish the supremacy of the male and to found a gender-biased hierarchical social order, and a paradigm of power-relations based on role and space divisions, and on biological difference and polarity." One wonders how Islamists and fundamentalists will react to such a statement!

A festival, however, is not a conference, and its success or failure depends largely on the quality of shows it offers. Of numbers or variety, there is no shortage: there will be approximately 45 companies from nearly 40 countries. So there is bound to be something to everyone's taste. Champions of feminist theatre can enjoy Singapore's *Three Virgins to the Moon* from the Kami Theatre company which features three women reliving the memories and past experiences of thirty years, the British WOMB company's *Freedom Comes Slowly*, and possibly Hungary's *The Dissimulators*, directed by Eva Magyar and Scaba Horvath. Cuba's *Life of Santa Cecilia* and The Amsterdam Chamber Theatre's version of Jean Anouilh's *Orchestra* which has a cast of six women and only one man. The romantically-inclined will definitely opt for Romania's *Toujous l'Amour* from the National Theatre of Bucharest, and the classically-minded will have Aristophanes's *Lysistrata* from Cyprus, Virgil's *Aeneid* from Italy and a production combining three plays by Aeschylus, Sophocles and Euripides called *Atrides* from Greece. Australia is taking part for the first time this year with *The Descent* from the Chapel of Change Company and it may be worthwhile looking at it. Other exciting possibilities are Japan's *Holocaust 20th Century: 100 Years of Pleasure and Destruction*, the British Improbable Theatre Company's *70 Hill Lane*, and the Cameroon's *Sens Unique*.

Lovers of dance and puppet theatre will be catered for by Austria, which is bringing the Tanz Hotel company for the second year with a dance show called *Brain Memory* and a marionette show from the Karim Schafer Figuren Theatre called simply *On the Marionette Theatre*. Curiously while the US has decided to be represented by the Latin American Theatre Experiment Association (LATEA), which is presenting *The Bald Mountain*, two Latin American countries — Argentina and Venezuela — saw fit to revive Samuel Beckett's *Happy Days* and *Waiting for Godot*: not much excitement there. The other Venezuelan guest-show, the Teatro Altosef's *My Beloved Emptiness* sounds more promising. Other countries taking part in the festival include, Turkey, Zambia, Bulgaria, many of the republics of the former USSR and seven Arab countries. But without seeing videos of their productions it is impossible to judge their quality. Some of them, however, have attractive titles like Algeria's *Love Journey*, Lebanon's *A State of Love*, and Syria's *Genghis Khan*. One wonders what Jordan's *The Hole*, Yemen's *Wisdom* or Kuwait's *Sway That the Giant May Wake Up* will be like.



The Secret of Scheherazade, Belarus

On the Egyptian front, there is a flurry of activity and fierce competition. Nasser Abdul Moneim's winning of the best director award last year has fired the imagination and ambition of many a young director and all dream of being selected to represent Egypt in the competition. During the next few days the selection committee appointed by the minister of culture will have to sift through 15 shows at least. Some of these have already been seen and judged by the public — like Karim El-Tonsi's dance theatre production *The Other Side of Silence*, Eva Maria Lerchenberg-Thony's version of *Buchner's Woyzek* (another dance-show, presented also at Al-Hanager), the National's *The Night the Great Guevara Was Killed*, the Cultural Development Fund's *The Seven Deadly Sins*, based on Brecht's play and directed by Hani Ghanem, and *The Story of an Egyptian Girl*, based on three dramatic poems by Naguib Soroor, directed by Hamada Shousha, and performed at the charming, historical home called Beit El-Harawi with only candles and lanterns as the source of light. The rest are still unfinished and their quality remains to be judged. There are encouraging reports, however, about El-Tali'a's *The Seven Days of Man* — an adaptation of Abdel-Hakim Qasim's novel of the same name by the same team who presented *The Collar and the Bracelet* last year and walked away with the Best Direction Award.

Most of these shows and others will be playing on the fringe of the competition and some of them at least could be worth sampling. For ten days Cairo will be a busy hive of theatrical activity and hopefully the quality of the productions and organisation will be better than in former years.

Frankly civilised

On the first anniversary of his death **Safynaz Kazem** pays tribute to Ahmed Bahaeddin, whose writings ring as true now as they did the day they were penned

This week marks the first anniversary of the death of Ahmed Bahaeddin. He belonged to an older generation than myself, was a decade or so older, and so I used to tell him that it was his misfortune to have to bear with me and put up with my foolishness.

I first met him in 1957, when he was editor-in-chief, at the age of 30, of *Sabah El-Kheir*, and I was a trainee journalist. I remember approaching him with a page, written by Tewfiq El-Hakim. This was all part of a complicated ploy. I was, at the time, working for *El-Geel El-Gedid* (The Young Generation) magazine, published by Akhbar El-Youm, and one of the favourite tricks of the time was to present senior journalists and critics on other publications with pieces by celebrated journalists or critics and claim they were actually the work of nobodies like me. Many people fell into the trap, finding very little merit in the work, including El-Aqqad and Ihsan Abdel-Quddous. But no sooner had Ahmed Bahaeddin read the piece than he replied: "Do you really want to know my opinion on Tewfiq El-Hakim's style?" And his reply was to become the core of a piece I wrote, under the title 'Frank opinions on the style of Tewfiq El-Hakim' that was published by *El-Geel El-Gedid* in January 1958.

Ever since that time I called him Mr Dahaa, which in Arabic means shrewdness, rather than Bahaa. It is from this time too that I date the beginnings of our friendship, a friendship that was to survive all the tests and travails of the times.

We exchanged letters, though often these travelled no further than an office in one corridor to an office in another. And though our correspondence was limited, it revealed many things about his professional methods.

Our friendship was based on differences of opinion rather than agreement, and whenever face to face discussions became difficult I would put my point of view on paper and then wait for a written reply from him. This strategy was to prove very effective in absorbing tensions, leaving room for us to laugh together when next we met.

Ahmed Bahaeddin had a wonderful sense of humour. Often, when I went to see him to express an opinion on something or other, he would tease me mercilessly before adopting a slightly resigned expression and asking, "Is it really my opinion you want, or just a confirmation of your own."

When, in 1964, I met Bahaeddin in New York, where I was then living though intending to move on to Australia, he suggested that perhaps I should return to Egypt. I said that I would only return if he arranged for my transfer from *Akhbar El-Youm* to Dar El-Hilal, where he was then chairman of the board. When I returned in 1966 I was appointed as a reporter on *Al-Mussawar*, which Bahaeddin edited, rather than as a theatre critic, which is the position to which my studies had been leading. Such was Bahaeddin's integrity that he would never expose himself to charges of nepotism. And it is the same sense of integrity, this same decency, that exudes from every line of his writings, and which is encapsulated in the collection published under the title *Youmiyat Hadhu Al-Zaman* (Chronicles of our time).



Bahaeddin was never one to beat around the bush. In his columns, as in his conversation, he would get straight to the point, and whether you agreed or disagreed with him, you cannot avoid, in this collection, the conclusion that he wrote always with a pen that was guided only by the dictates of a free mind and a clear conscience. And reading this volume one cannot help but relive the relish with which I, like a great many others, would turn to the back page of *Al-Ahram*, eager for a column that effortlessly combined warmth with decorum.

It invariably addressed itself to topics of concern to the reader, was stylish yet accessible and I, for one, felt always as if I had just been sitting in his office, discussing matters over a cup of coffee. Not that there was ever a question of over-familiarity — Ahmed Bahaeddin was far too civilised a man for that. Rather, he combined the best qualities of traditional Egyptian good manners with the training and meticulousness of the judge that he would undoubtedly have become had he continued in the legal profession.

In his columns he would often assume the role of prosecutor, passionately outlining the crimes of his quarry, while at other times he would take the role of the defence, using all his skill to elicit sympathy for those — usually ordinary Egyptians — that he perceived to be victims of circumstance. And sometimes he would become the judge, summing up cases in a way that admitted no further appeal. Yet even when assuming the mantle of judge; he combined the detachment necessary to lend objectivity to his judgments and maintain the dignity and moral authority of his position. Nor did he ever lose his sense of humour.

Writing a daily column in a newspaper is more difficult than walking a tightrope, and few succeed in keeping their balance and maintaining the interest of their readers. Ahmed Bahaeddin is one of the very few columnists who could grab the attention of the reader, and keep it from his opening words to the signature at the bottom of his column. And between, flowing sentences, at once relaxed and brief, without resort to unnecessary flourishes, clichés and predictable formulas.

Vital without resorting to raucousness, quiet without being boring, replete without breathlessness, delicate without fragility, strong without violence, rising always above the petty in both his likes and dislikes — these are the characteristics of Bahaeddin's writings, just as they were the characteristics of his life.

Plain Talk

Britain is celebrating the centennial of the birth of the children's writer Enid Blyton. Forty other nations, in whose languages Blyton's books were translated, are joining Britain in the celebrations. It is estimated that 8 million of her books are sold every year world wide. She's widely read in India and China.

I personally watched two generations of children grow up with her books. My own son, who was born in London in 1946, began his life listening to *Noddy* read by his mother, then later on he began to consume *The Famous Five* saga. At that time Enid Blyton was the top writer for children and I shall always remember children queuing at Hamley's toy shop to get Enid Blyton's books signed by her. I must admit that I was one of the queuers, with my son of course. The second generation was that of my granddaughter, who is now 17. She too was brought up on Enid Blyton's books. With the current celebrations many questions are asked about the reason behind the success and survival of her books.

Enid Blyton has been subjected to severe and, at time, vicious attacks. Some public libraries have even barred her books from their shelves. One critic of children's books described them as "terrible and a waste of time and good paper". Her language was described as impoverished and her plots as repetitive. And yet she has managed to outsell the 5,000 or so children's books published in Britain every year.

Her supporters believe, and I must agree with them, that she is a wonderful story teller. You can recount to a child the silliest story which he will listen to eagerly if you tell it nicely. Children do not question the language of their writers or the literary value of what they are reading. They want an interesting story, and this Enid Blyton supplies. She might have been a flawed writer in the literary sense, as a critic says, but she knew how to entertain children. The trouble with many writers for children is that entertainment with them comes second. They believe that children's books should have a message. For children such books are boring. According to Rumer Godden, the author of some prize winning children's classics, children "want a story that lifts them out of everyday life. They do not care if the prose is sometimes shoddy. They keep on turning pages."

Enid Blyton's world was free of "parental constraints and the challenge of paedophiles, poverty and pedestrian crossings; many of the young pretenders to her crown embrace the sort of gritty social realism displayed in the recent winner of the Carnegie Medal for children's literature, *Junk*, a tale of sex and drugs for teenagers," writes Peter Stanford in the *Sunday Times'* Culture supplement.

Different opinions are expressed about Blyton's popularity. Kim Reynolds, director of the National Centre for Research in Children's Literature, believes that the prevalence of message carrying children's books is one reason for this popularity. "Blyton had the advantage of writing in what were liberated times," he writes. "There were no pressures on her to stress safety hazards as her heroes wander to the Downs... Blyton offered a world of freedom that most children can only dream of. That was an enormous appeal, especially when she makes hard things seem easy."

One of the critics makes a comparison between Blyton and writers of the 1960s and '70s. Many of the most acclaimed writers of that period, Reynolds says, "have never become household names. They have failed to equal the impact of Blyton." They moved away from Blyton's moralising tones "where the naughty people deserved their punishment while the good received their reward." Those writers avoided condemnation and tried to explain why a child might misbehave. Yet children do not want moral ambiguities or complex messages: they prefer black and white truths. It is here that Enid Blyton "seems more with her readers than her grown up critics."

Mursi Saad El-Din

Speak out or submit

The fate of battered wives remains grim. **Mariz Tadros** seeks out some answers

The *Progress of Nations* report prepared by UNICEF this year reveals violence against women to be a worldwide phenomenon. Egypt is no exception. But it is only recently that the media, the government and NGOs have awakened to the legacy of domestic violence in Egyptian society.

Amina Guindy, head of the National Council for Childhood and Motherhood, cautions that "violence against women in Egypt has not reached the point of becoming a phenomenon. If we compare it to the violence perpetrated against women in the United States, Asia or Africa, we will see that it is much less serious in Egypt. In fact, we hear more today about wives beating up or killing their spouses than vice versa." Guindy believes that, while wife-beating may be quite common in Egypt, cases of extreme violence against women are rare and exceptional. She notes that domestic violence is not gender-specific, but, rather, reflective of a general rise of crime in society: "It is not a family issue or a question of female-male struggle, it is a dilemma affecting society as a whole. It indicates a general deterioration of communication and ways of relating to one another on a social level, which of course shows itself in personal relationships."

A survey on violence against women conducted by the New Woman Research Centre and El-Nadim Centre for the management and rehabilitation of victims of torture and violence, however, suggests that women are targeted because of their gender. Five hundred women and one hundred men from different socio-economic and educational backgrounds answered a questionnaire, which revealed that violence in the family, contrary to popular belief, tends to be underestimated. For instance, 94 per cent of men and 83 per cent of women said they knew families in which sons hit their mothers. Similar proportions said they knew of families where brothers hit their sisters and daughters were married off against their will. As for incest, 68 per cent of men and 64 per cent of women personally knew of incest cases committed by a father, brother or step-father.

The questionnaire also asked the women what they considered abusive behaviour in the household: 88 per cent said that they felt the husband's demand for total submission to him was a form of violence. Even higher rates considered marital rape, polygamy and the threat of taking the children forms of violent behaviour. As for direct experience of marital violence, 31 per cent said they were threatened with beating or actually beaten. 21 per cent were slapped on the face and 16 per cent were battered by their husbands.

Of the male respondents, 64 per cent felt it was their right to impose their will on their wives, while 70 per cent — of which 30 per cent held university degrees — said there were sometimes justifications for violence against wives.

Aida Seif El-Dawla, of New Woman, notes that, while police brutality or corporal violence at school are not socially justified, violence against women is sometimes regarded as necessary. Justifications, she suggested, include "she went too far, she challenged his authority, she challenged his sense of manhood, he is poor and frustrated and can't help taking it out on his wife..."

Iman Baybers has had 14 years' experience working in development and gender-related projects in the poor urban quarters of Cairo. "Put yourself in her place," she says: "Her husband is beating her up, she is too scared to do anything about it. She has never taken a decision on her own in her life. If she does decide to run away, where does she go? There is always the danger that someone might try to assault her on the streets, since she is a woman on her own. So she'll go back to her family. They may be mistreating her — you don't know what is going on inside the family itself. Or her family may be too poor to take care of her, they may try to get her remarried if she gets a divorce and so the cycle begins again."

Baybers considers that women's survival tactics clearly illustrate serious psychological disturbances. "There are those who go numb, who no longer respond to beating, who put up with it and shut up just to get on with their daily duties." Baybers points out that many women live in fantasy worlds to escape the misery of life with their husbands.

Another survival tactic is for a woman to deliberately or subconsciously downplay her husband's abuse. Seif El-Dawla and Baybers both spoke of cases where obviously ill-treated women defended their husbands. Baybers suggests that these women actually seek to defend their own passivity, thus mustering the will and self-respect to go on living.

Other women, however, are driven over the brink. Husband-killing, says Amira Bahaeddin, a prominent lawyer who has been involved in personal status cases for the past 18 years, is one form of counter-violence. At El-Qanater women's prison, Bahaeddin met a 30-year-old illiterate mother of five. She killed her husband, who had worked as a cook in the Gulf for several years. He wanted to marry a younger woman but refused to grant her a divorce. He beat her up on a regular basis, sometimes in front of her children. On the day she killed him, he had come home from work at dawn. When she asked him to leave her and the children alone, he hit her and said he would be marrying soon and that her children would be his new wife's servants. He pulled out a kitchen knife and threatened to kill her if she had not left the house by the time he had finished his prayers.

A legal solution for women trapped in abusive relationships is not realistic, Bahaeddin points out. "It is not a question of what is or is not legally possible. Some things are legally permissible but socially unacceptable." There is no legal framework to protect a woman from her abusive husband; divorce, although legally plausible, is not the solution. "Unless a woman has her own finances and her family to support her, I often advise her not to leave her husband or seek a divorce, no matter how bad it is," she says. It is not a question of supporting or tolerating domestic violence, she warns, but a question of realistically assessing the available options and their consequences. When people think that religion and society condone wife-beating, what can the courts do?" she demands.




The remedy: better communication

Mohamed Omara, a prominent Islamic scholar and writer, insists that domestic violence is unequivocally rejected by Islam. He insists that religion serves as a scapegoat. Omara argues that marriage must be built on harmony, tranquility, mercy and companionship, which is impossible if a man uses violence against his wife and children. As for the Qur'anic verse commonly referred to in justification of wife-battering, Omara noted that this applied only to "the recalcitrant wife whose intention is to destroy the family through disobedience.". Even in the case of the recalcitrant wife, however, the husband must not hit her in a demeaning way, Omara emphasised.

Pot Pourri

The bed

It took my mother eight years to reconcile herself to the idea that we had actually gone to live on another continent. One day, after years of silence, I received a telegram out of the blue. She was winging her way towards us at that very moment, and would be arriving early in the morning. Thrill and joy came second to worrying about the logistics involved in such a wonderful surprise. We were not well equipped to receive visitors. My mother needed a room — the baby would sacrifice hers, we decided at once — and a bed. The bed was the most difficult part. There was no such a thing as an instant furniture delivery service, and we only had ten hours to get organised, including the time necessary to go to the airport. Besides, good beds were not exactly cheap. My husband appeared quite reluctant to go to such expense for a visit that, he emphasised, was bound to be short.

Finally, a neighbour agreed to lend us her older son's bed, complete with sheets, provided we gave it back within a month. "Are you sure?" I murmured, immensely relieved, hoping that she was and would insist that we take it. It was no trouble at all, she indeed insisted, and came over at once with her husband to set up the bed. Their son would not be home for another month, so in the meantime we were welcome to use it.

When she arrived, my mother, wanting to keep her options open, did not say how long she intended to stay. After so many years of not seeing her, I thought it in poor taste to ask. Nor did I deem it necessary to disclose the origins of the bed she was going to sleep in. At the end of the first month, she had still said nothing about her intentions.

My neighbour started calling. Vince, she said, was arriving in a couple of days, and when would it be convenient for them to come and pick up the bed? By this time, my husband was resisting any hints that the purchase of a bed was an immediate priority. He came up with all sorts of excuses. What if she left in the next couple of days? What would we do with the bed then? Beside, I would have to explain to my mother that she had been sleeping in someone else's bed, a thing my husband was sure she would resent. Better talk my friend into waiting a while, he would invariably conclude, not offering to do it himself. My friend, on the other hand, had begun to voice her regrets at having tried to help us. Vince, she informed me, had arrived, and was forced to sleep in a sleeping bag in his bed-less bedroom. I apologised humbly, appealed to her generosity and patience as well as Vince's, and generally did my best to avoid her. On the numerous occasions when I couldn't, I made solemn promises that I ended up not keeping.

By the time my mother was ready to leave, my neighbour's tone had considerably changed. She was now threatening to come and forcibly repossess the bed. I locked my house, a thing I had so far never done, before leaving to run the smallest errand. I was terrified by the idea of a chance encounter between the bed's owner and my mother. I broke into a cold sweat just imagining the kind of conversation that could ensue. Before driving my mother to the airport on her last day, and while she was settling herself in the car, I ran to her room, yanked the sheets off the bed and threw them into the washing machine. They would finally be ready to be returned to their rightful owner, together with the bed, when I came back from the airport. Suddenly my mother was standing behind me in the room, looking at the sheetless bed. "You couldn't wait to see me go," she said sadly. "You are trying to remove every trace of my visit, aren't you?" I muttered something lame about drawing silly conclusions and tried not to cry. There was no way I could confess now. The misunderstanding added to the sadness of seeing her go, not knowing at the time if or when we would see each other again. When we gave the bed back, a couple of hours later, we were icily informed that Vince had left that very morning, having had to sleep on the floor during his entire holidays.

A few weeks ago, I visited my daughter in Florida. Picking me up at the airport, she announced: "This year, you will have your own room and bathroom." Her new house is lovely and very comfortable in every respect. I especially enjoyed the bed, which was luxuriously soft. As I was packing to leave, my grandson stood observing me. "Mom," he told his mother, remembering suddenly, "Jenny called. She said that she was coming to pick up her bed.... I mean Grandma's bed tonight." I showed no sign of having heard and, after a while, my daughter relaxed, reassured. I hope that, when I go back next year, Jenny will lend me her comfortable bed again.

Fayza Hassan

Feeling the heat

Where is global warming going? **Mahmoud Bakr** watches the mercury

Rising humidity and temperatures are a recent phenomenon, according to Dr Ibrahim Abdel-Gelil, chairman of the Organisation for Energy Conservation and Planning and co-ordinator of the project to develop strategies for coping with climate change. "Recent studies have revealed that global temperatures have risen half a degree centigrade in the past century." But temperatures seem set to soar much more rapidly in the coming century. Ocean levels will rise, and many of the globe's most fertile areas will be submerged, affecting developing countries like Egypt, China, India, Indonesia and Bangladesh especially severely. Heavy rains and droughts will afflict various parts of the world, one of the symptoms of the greenhouse effect (GHE), which is brought about by increased emissions of greenhouse gases (GHG) such as carbon, methane and chloroflurorocarbons.

The greenhouse effect, therefore, is a disaster in the making. Ibrahim assures: "The world realises the serious nature of this problem. At the Earth Summit in 1992, almost 160 nations put it at the top of their list of priorities. Egypt ratified the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and was a party to the convention of December 1994, which aims to establish a steady average of GHG emissions at a certain level.

"The GHE problem and climate change are no longer considered illusions or possibilities, but are increasingly regarded as concrete facts," says Salwa El-Tayeb, a consultative engineer at the Egyptian Environmental Affairs Agency. "Climate change is a natural phenomenon, but the increase in human activities intensifies it." El-Tayeb, however, categorically denies any connection between the hole in the ozone layer and the GHE.

According to El-Tayeb, "Egypt undertook a research project to estimate its rates of GHG emission with the help of the United Nations Development Programme and the Finnish government. This study revealed that there were 57 alternatives to current practices. Choosing these alternatives would allow us to reduce emissions, but would not force us to forgo any economic benefits." There are still those who deny that global climates are undergoing any change. Sherif Hamed, head of the Institute of Meteorology, cites a study carried out on temperature variations over the past 30 years to support his claim that climates have not changed.

Hamed assures: "The increase in temperature is natural. We are responsible, however, for stifling ourselves with over-population, bad ventilation and high buildings."

Hamed, however, notes that "the huge number of cars, factories and air-conditioning units increases the emission of toxic gases."

Sufra Dayma

Shrimps Egyptian-style

Ingredients:
1 1/2 kg. shrimps
1/2 kg. fresh button mushrooms (coarsely chopped)
2 large onions (finely chopped)
1 tbsp. crushed garlic
1 kg. tomatoes (diced)
1 bunch parsley leaves (finely chopped)
Butter
Salt + pepper + allspice + turmeric + bay leaves

Method:
Heat the butter and gently fry the onion until yellowish, then add the mushrooms and stir until tender. Add the shrimps, cover and leave over medium heat for five minutes until dried. Add the garlic. Stir, and add the tomatoes and season. Stir all ingredients in. Cover and allow to cook for half an hour over medium heat. Remove from heat and stir in the parsley. Remove the bayleaves. Serve hot with rice and a rich green salad.

Moushira Abdel-Malek

Restaurant review

Old world wonders

Andrew Steele visits a certain kind of eatery

There is a certain kind of dining establishment that can be found in both Cairo and Alexandria, venues that boast a certain type of regular clientele and a menu of Eurocentric perennials. One could conjure such names as the Elite, the Estoril, or, if one finds oneself in Heliopolis, Le Petit Palmyra. Not that it is small — far from it. The spacious, two-tier dining area boasts high ceilings bedecked with dark-wood beams, a platform for the piano player and little stepped rockeries. Mock torches ornament the walls and serve as lighting. The old-rose linen is crisp and clean.

A waiter with a jaunty smile proffered the huge leatherette-clad menus, delivered the drinks, and left us to ponder. They were all there, those old favourites — the *escalope panée*, the *picutta* Milanese, the pepper steak, the lentil soup. We decided not to be too adventurous and summoned a selection of salads and an order of *kobeba*; to be followed by an *escalope panée* and a Madagascar steak (pepper steak, when it's at home).

Warm *shami* bread was served almost instantly, and mere minutes later a fine array of *tahina*, *baba ghanoug* and *taboula* turned up to keep it company. The *kobeba*, due to a vital engagement with the deep fat frier, arrived mid-course. All were as good as they should be. The *tahina* light and smooth with not too much vinegar. The *baba ghanoug* coarse, dark and very smoky. The *taboula* getting the mix of parsley, tomato, cracked wheat and onion down to a tee. The *kobeba* was a different kettle of fish entirely: obviously homemade, it was quite exquisite (insofar as *kobeba* can be) and was a spicy blend of meat and cereal with a slither of soft onion at the centre. Deliciously crisp on the outside, belying its moist and savoury secrets, revealed upon entry.

The main courses were brought with no small amount of flourish by the maitre d', who athletically whipped off the stainless steel serving lids, and, with much ceremony and a dazzling beam, delivered the plates. Good plain fare forms the backbone of the Petit Palmyra's menu, and one feels it wise that one plumped not for anything too adventurous. My escalope was wafer-thin, obviously beaten into submission by a most enthusiastic chef, nicely breaded and tender as can be. Served with lemon wedges, a smattering of *pommes frites* and the inevitable sauté, it was a fine example of what restaurants of this ilk are really very good at. As much can be said for the pepper steak. "A nice bit of meat," chipped in my dining companion, when quizzed as to the extent of his gastronomic enjoyment. A nice bit of sauce too, he might have added, for it contained whole, braised peppercorns and was neither too sludgy nor too rich. As a daring alternative to *pommes frites*, this dish came with a mound of white rice, pleasingly buttered. The sauté was not inconspicuous by its absence, but that's no bad thing, for the Petit Palmyra's sauté is closer to al dente than watery slop and has a distinct twang of garlic.

A good square meal then, if it's that certain type of fare you are looking for, and with a bill of LE78 with the tried and tested two Stellas, a bit of a bargain to boot.

Le Petit Palmyra, 27 Al-Ahram St., Heliopolis
Tel: 4171720

Al-Ahram Weekly

Crossword

By Samia Abdennour

ACROSS
1. Imitated (4)
5. A Peruvian tribe (4)
9. Dens (5)
14. Terrible (4)
15. Top storey of building with plants, restautant, etc. (10)
17. Thralldom: slavery (7)
19. Shape (4)
20. Musical note (2)
21. Electrically charged particle (3)
22. Noose; buckle (4)
23. Soaked (3)
24. Catkin (5)
27. Rhymer (4)
28. In ... = sitting as a full court (4)
29. Hollow out (4)
30. Merge (4)
31. 1/10 (5)
32. Miss Braun (3)
33. Medicine glass container (4)
34. Carried (4)
35. Downward slope (7)
37. Persons who rouse game for shooting (7)
40. Parched (4)
41. Fling; thow (4)
42. Sindibad's legendary bird (3)
43. Confused noise of voices (5)
45. Offensive appellation for "foreigner" (4)
46. Greek letter (4)
47. Narrow band at end of shield (4)
48. Portuguese monetary unit, pl. (4)
49. Type of car (5)
50. Deer (3)
51. Slow witted (4)
52. Step (3)
53. French for US (2)
54. Windstorm (4)
55. Microbes (7)
59. Inharmonious (10)
62. Food and drink (4)
63. Selected lists of candidates for some office (5)
64. Comfort (4)
65. Greek alphabet, pl. (4)

DOWN
1. Paid notices (3)
2. Turnover, tart (3)
3. Go astray (3)
4. Throw light on (6)
5. Hard metal (4)
6. ... de guerre (3)
7. Symbol for "cobalt" (2)
8. Have means for (6)
9. Songbird (4)
10. Limb (3)
11. Ego (2)
12. Comply; sober down (6)
13. Grapple for, appropriate (6)
16. Virtuous (4)
18. Period (3)
22. Passageway (4)
23. Drifted; diverged (8)
24. Lying down (4)
25. Change place (4)
26. Can be effaced (8)
27. Batter (4)
28. Girdle (4)
30. Cognitive function (4)
31. Freshwater-duck (4)
33. Yashmak (4)
34. Champion (4)
36. American Indian people living in Canada (4)
37. Secret mikes (4)
38. Roster (4)
39. Inspect (4)
41. Greet enthusiastically (4)
43. Of the North wind (6)
44. Put in motion (6)
45. Obliterate (6)
46. Near (6)
48. Tenet; reign (4)
49. Baglike structure (3)
51. Beavers' barriers (4)
52. Rate of speed (4)
54. International reference time, abb. (3)
55. Again, a call at theatre (3)
56. Illuminated (3)
57. Pasture (3)
58. Pronoun (3)
60. Poetic form for "you" (2)
61. Sun god (2)

Last week's solution

Looming for centuries

The Ancient Egyptians were believed never to have worn woollen clothes, but recent findings at a workmen's village in Tel Al-Amarna suggest otherwise, writes **Lyla Pinch Brock**

For many years, students of Ancient Egyptian costume have assumed that the Egyptians were restricted in their choice of clothing *to two materials:* linen and animal skins. This assumption was based on depictions found in reliefs as well as the examples of clothing known to us, chiefly from Old Kingdom burials and the unique clothing collection of Tutankhamun. Now, however, Barry Kemp, working on behalf of the Egypt Exploration Society (EES), has discovered a weaving industry and some evidence vital to the history of Egyptian textiles. Evidence which may, in fact, change our thinking about Egyptians sartorial habits. How, scholars have long wondered, did the Ancient Egyptians manage to keep warm in winter when *linen* clothes would have been too light?

During the last few seasons, Barry Kemp's team has not only found vestiges of wool clothing, but also evidence of a substantial textile industry at Amarna.

The workmen's village at Amarna was first excavated by the EES in 1921. Kemp's excavations started in 1979. It is one of the few villages remaining from ancient Egypt and, like others at Kahun in Fayoum province and Deir Al-Medina on the Theban necropolis, was separated from the main town site by a wall.

It proved to be a well-planned compound containing a network of regular streets and two-storey houses. The village was occupied for only a short span of time, beginning in 1350BC, and contained only a single type of occupation. It is better preserved than other sites, having been sanded-over after the city founded by Akhenaten was deserted and the priests of Amun at Thebes returned to power.

The villagers packed up all their belongings and left when the city began to decline. Before they departed, however, they took out the *"garbage" and dumped it in quarry* pits outside the village. Kemp and his crew recovered most of the fabric from these dumps, retrieving over 1,000 fragments of material, most of which were too small to reveal the form of the costume they came from.

Describing his findings to a gathering at the British Council, Kemp said, "We got part of a loincloth which had ties, *apparently to gather* the garment at the waist... also part of a patchwork quilt, made up of red and white squares, possibly the remains of a canopy, and a piece of a blanket of brown, striped material, perhaps made of goat hair."

Weavers' marks were found on the clothing, but there was no evidence of pleating, such as pleating-boards. Remarkably, Kemp and his team recovered a small quantity of wool, fragments of which had been dyed red. Despite the fact that there is ample evidence of goat and sheep husbandry in Egypt, there is none of the wearing of wool clothing. The controversy remains whether, as Herodotus suggested, the Ancient Egyptians considered these animals "unclean" and therefore shunned garments made of their wool or hair, or whether wool had been in common use, but little survived because of attacks by white ants and moths.

To Kemp, the most important discovery was that, "...the remains showed a cross-section of a range of qualities of cloth." Many of the pieces were fringed — both short and long fringe — some ending in balls, some twisted. Fringed garments were a feature of Amarna clothing, known especially from tomb reliefs: Amenhotep III, Nefertiti, Akhenaten and Tu*tankhamun all wore fringed gar*ments. It was a principal form of decoration. These garments were often shown in reliefs as lengths of decorated and fringed cloth wrapped several times around the body.

It appears that the village at Amarna was a "weaver's village". Spindles and whorls were found in 25 per cent of the houses. Spin*ning* bowls with two and three handles and the use of the flat-bed loom indicate that very fine materials could be spun and woven there. Not only was flax spun, but apparently other materials as well, perhaps wool. The evidence points to a highly-specialised craft industry employing many people.

The process for spinning flax was difficult and time-consuming: the fibre had to be wet and it was hard to separate. In models found in tombs, flax is shown being drawn into a two-ply thread and spun. *The flat-bed loom was used at first.* The upright loom was introduced during the time of the 18th Dynasty, when Akhenaten's father was pharaoh. Kemp found the limestone sockets used to steady the legs of upright looms and the hoops used to hold them in place. The change in loom-type coincided with a switch from female to male weavers, resulting in a male-*dominated craft at Amarna.*

"It was quite an investment to have a loom of that quality," Kemp said of one of his findings. The weaver's village at Amarna is believed to have targeted the wealthy class, possibly the inhabitants of the royal palace.



Places to visit

Royal Jewellery Museum

Background: Originally the palace of princess Fatma El-Zahraa, of the Mohamed Ali family, this architectural gem was built in 1919 in 19th century European-style. Converted into a jewellery museum in 1986, it still retains its original interior decor.

Floors and walls have the initials FH carved on them, and the bathrooms have frescos in such fresh *colours that they appear newly-painted.*

The museum has two storeys, the lower being a large reception area, the upper divided into five rooms.

Noteworthy: The museum's collection of royal jewellery is of great historical importance and *inestimable value. Among the many items on* display are a snuff box carved with Mohamed Ali's name, and several gold watches with coloured enamel which once belonged to the khedives Ismail and Tawfiq. There are many objets d'art from the legacy of King Fouad, among which are a gold knob set with diamonds, gold medals and decorations.

But there is more to see than jewels. Love and courtship go hand in hand with gifts and jewels, so it is not inappropriate to discover that among the architectural features of the museum are magnificent stained glass door panels depicting a *love* story. Created by the Italian painter Ditta Quentin with Italian glass in 1923, the doors trace romance from courtship to marriage and include portrayals of the wedding and the birth of the first child.

Practical information: The museum is open daily from *9am to 3.30pm and on public holidays from* 9am to 2.30pm. Tickets are LE10 for foreigners, LE5 for foreign students; PT50 for Egyptians and PT25 for Egyptian students.

photo: Sherif Sonbol

Restoring ancestral hopes

Efforts to restore and display Pharaonic, Coptic and Islamic antiquities are picking up speed

Motivated by the cultural need to preserve heritage and the more mundane need to encourage tourism, the Supreme Council of Antiquities is launching serious efforts to improve the conditions *of various archaeological sites and re*train the country's curators and inspectors, reports Nevine El-Aref .

In Old Cairo, the Hanging Church, the nearby Coptic Museum and the Roman fortress of Babylon on which the church was built, will receive a long-awaited restoration at the hand of two major companies; the partly state-owned Arab Contractors, and the privately-owned Orascom. The restoration work, expected to begin soon, .will last for 20 months.

The project will involve installing monitoring equipment to watch the rate of subterranean water and prevent its leakage into the church's walls. Since the 1992 earthquake, which caused structural damage to the antiquities at *the site, wooden scaffolding has been* used to support parts of both the church and the Babylon fortress.

A two-month project will start soon at *the Giza Plateau to improve the south*ern section of the Pyramids' causeway and restore 10 rock-embedded tombs belonging to royal figures and top administrators of the Old Kingdom. They are said to be markedly different in style and design from the New Kingdom tombs in Luxor.

Another restoration project is under way in Sinai. Its aim is to develop the Mameluke fortress of Al-Tina near Al-Qantara Sharq as a tourist site. The Saladin fortress, situated on a small island in the northern tip of the Gulf of Aqaba, is also up for a facelift designed to make it suitable for the display of recently discovered artifacts in Sinai. These two endeavours are part of a LE300-million national programme to develop Sinai *until the year 2017.*

Administrative and technical staff of museums and archaeological sites are currently undergoing training in museum display methods and administrative skills. The course is organised by the Supreme Council of Antiquities (SCA) in collaboration with the Islamic Education, Science and Cultural Organisation (ISESCO).

Cairo's old defences dug up

Forgotten for centuries, new finds dating from the time of the Fatimid and Ayyubid dynasties have recently been unearthed near the Citadel in Cairo and in Fayoum. **Nevine El-Aref** reports

The remains of Cairo's ancient city wall and a tower with 40 gun apertures, both dating back to the Ayyubid era, were unearthed last week *during excavations near the Citadel in* Cairo's Al-Qalaa district.

According to Ali Hassan, secretary-general of the Supreme Council of Antiquities (SCA), the wall was constructed by Salaheddin Al-Ayyubi (Saladin), the founder of the Ayyubid Empire which ruled Egypt during the 12th and 13th centuries AD, to enclose the four Islamic capitals of Al-Fustat, Al-Askar, Al-Quatai'a and Cairo and protect them from invasion. The wall, which runs 3,000 metres from the Bab Al-Wazir area to Al-Darrassa Square in medieval Cairo, deteriorated badly after the changes made to Cairo during the reign of Khedive Ismail, and its historical significance is only now coming to light.

Hassan added that the tower is only one of many others which were built in the area. It leads to a tunnel and two *small underground rooms*, and is also linked to the wall by another tunnel. Hassan said that excavation work is still under way in the area, and a team of restorers is working to make the area an attraction for tourists.

In addition, an Egyptian excavation team working in the Deir Al-Malak area in Fayoum Governorate found a leather case full of commercial transaction documents and papyrus while restoring the wall of Al-Malak Monastery last week. The documents, written in simple Kufic script, date from the Fatimid era. The documents give an insight into trade relations among Egyptians during the tenth and eleventh centuries AD, said Hassan.

He added that other excavations at Kom-Oshim in Fayoum have also revealed burial grounds as well as pieces of linen decorated with coloured drawings and a collection of copper domestic utensils.

Meanwhile, in the Deir Al-Banaat area in the eastern hills of Fayoum, an ancient city and remains of Al-Banaat Monastery were unearthed *high up on a cliff. A cemetery of 100* tombs and a collection of wooden sarcophagi were also found in the area.

The sarcophagi are decorated with coloured drawings and a portrait of the deceased. " This tradition is an imitation of the Pharaonic masks *which were put on the face of the de*ceased," said Hassan, adding that the archaeologists have also found a collection of masks made of cartonnage.

Site tours

Buses

Super Jet, East Delta and West Delta buses operate throughout Egypt

Super Jet

Super Jet stations are located in Almaza (Heliopolis), Tahrir, Giza, Ramsis Street and Cairo Airport. Buses travel to Alexandria, Port Said, Hurghada and Sinai. Tel. 772-663

Cairo-Alexandria
Services almost every half hour from 5.30am to 10pm, from Tahrir, *then Giza, Almaza and the airport.* Tickets LE19 until 9pm; LE21 thereafter; from the airport LE24 until 5pm; LE30 thereafter.
A VIP bus with phone access leaves Almaza at 7.15am. Tickets from Almaza LE29; from the airport LE32 each way.

Cairo-Marsa Matrouh
Services at 7am departure and 7pm return from Almaza and Tahrir Square. Tickets LE36.
Cairo-Sidi Abdel-Rahman
Services at 6.30am, 7am, 8am, 9am and 3.45pm. Tickets LE32
Cairo-Port Said
Services every half hour from 6am to 8am; then 9am, 10am, 3pm, and 4.30pm, from *Almaza, then* Ramsis Street. Tickets LE15 each way.

Alexandria-Port Said
Service 6.45am, from Ramleh Square in Alexandria. Departs Port Said 3.30pm. Tickets LE22 each way.

Cairo-Hurghada
Services 8am and 2pm, from Tahrir, then Giza and Almaza. Departs Hurghada noon and 5pm. Tickets LE40 until 5pm, LE45 thereafter, both each way.

Alexandria-Hurghada
Service 8pm, from Ramleh Square, Alexandria. Departs Hurghada 2.30pm. Tickets LE60 each way.
Cairo-Sharm El-Sheikh
Service 11pm, from Tahrir, then Almaza. Departs Sharm El-Sheikh 11pm. Tickets LE50 each way.

East Delta Bus Company
Buses travel to North/South Sinai
Sinai, Suez and Ismailia. Buses to Ismailia and Suez depart from Qulali (near Ramsis Square), Almaza and Tagnid Square (near Heliopolis). Buses to North and South Sinai depart from the Sinai bus station at Abbassiya Square. Tel. 482-4753.

Cairo-Ismailia
Services every 45 minutes from *6.30am to 6pm, from Qulali, then* Almaza and Tagnid Square. Tickets deluxe bus LE5.75; air-conditioned bus LE5.25, one way.

Cairo-Suez
Services every half hour from 6am to 7pm, from Qulali, then Almaza and Tagnid Square. Tickets deluxe bus LE5.75; air-conditioned bus LE5, one way.

Cairo-El-Arish
Services every hour from 7.30am to 4pm, from Qulali, then Almaza and Tagnid Square. Tickets deluxe bus LE21; air-conditioned bus *LE13*, one way.

Cairo-Sharm El-Sheikh
Services every 45 min. from 7am to 6.30pm *from* Abbassiya, then Almaza. Tickets morning LE27; evening LE40, one way.

Cairo-Nuweiba
Service 8am, from Abbassiya, then Almaza. Tickets deluxe bus LE31.

West Delta Bus Company

Stations at Tahrir and Almaza. Tel. 243-1846.

Cairo-Hurghada
Services 9am, noon, 3pm, 10.30pm, 10.45pm and 11pm. Tickets LE30 one way.

Cairo-Safaga
Services 9am and 3pm. Tickets LE35 one way.
Cairo-Quseir
Service 10pm. Tickets LE38 one way.

Cairo-Luxor
Service 9am. Tickets LE35 one way.

Cairo-Aswan
Service 5pm. Tickets LE50 one way.

Trains

Trains run to *Alexandria*, Port Said, Luxor and Aswan, from Ramsis Station. Tel. 147 or 575-3555.

Cairo-Luxor-Aswan
"French" deluxe trains with sleepers
Services to Luxor and Aswan 7.40pm and 9pm (reaching Luxor *6.40 am and 8am, Aswan 8.40am* and 10am). Tickets to Luxor LE294 for foreigners and LE129 for Egyptians, to Aswan LE300 for foreigners; LE141 for Egyptians.
"Spanish" deluxe trains without sleepers
Services to Luxor and Aswan *6.45pm, 8.45pm and 9.45pm.* Tickets to Luxor: first class LE51; second class LE31. Tickets to Aswan: first class LE63; second class LE37.

Cairo-Alexandria
"Torbini" trains
VIP train: Service 8am. Tickets first class LE32 with a meal; *LE22* without a meal.
Standard trains: Services 9am, 11am, noon, 5pm and *7pm*. Tickets first class LE22; second class LE17.
"French" trains
Services hourly from 6am to 10.30pm. Tickets first class LE20; second class LE12.

Cairo-Port Said
Services 6.20am and 8.45am. Tickets first class LE45; second class LE26.

EgyptAir

There are between two and five domestic flights daily. Check EgyptAir: Adly 390-0999; Opera 390-2444; or Hilton 772410.

Cairo-Aswan
Tickets LE351 for Egyptians, LE1143 for foreigners, both *round-trip.*

Cairo-Luxor
Tickets LE259 for Egyptians, LE829 for foreigners, both round-trip.

Cairo-Hurghada
Tickets LE279 for Egyptians, *LE898* for foreigners, both round-trip.

Cairo-Sharm El-Sheikh
Tickets LE287 *for* Egyptians, LE945 for foreigners, both round-trip.

Egyptian tourism on the Internet

Here are some useful addresses on the Internet, including tourism magazines, archaeology and travel agency programmes:

http:// www.idsc.gov.eg/links.htm is an address through which you can access other useful tourism addresses on the Internet. Here they are:

http://www.idsc.gov.eg/tourism is the address of Egypt's Tourism Net which provides directories of Egypt's hotels, restaurants, cruise lines, travel agents, transportation companies and tourist attractions. Egypt's tourism net is a part of many home pages (culture, health, environment, etc) created by the IDSC as a part of the nation's Information Highway.

http://163.121.10.41/tourism is the key to Egypt Has it All, where Egypt's tourist sites, such as the Red Sea, Cairo, Luxor, Aswan, the Sinai, Alexandria, oases and ETA offices abroad are described. The magazine also contains colour photographs of Egypt.

http://www.memphis.edu/egypt/egypt.htm is the address of the University of Memphis, and describes their projects in Egypt.

http://www-ceg.ceg.vivc.edu/~haggag/travel.html is the address of Egypt's Tours and Travel, which organises packages for people who *want* to take *quality* tours. It is an Egyptian tour operator, which specialises in tours within Egypt, the Holy Land and the Middle East.

http://www.geocities.com/TheTropics/7210 is the address of The Curse of the Pharaohs. It includes photographs of ancient tombs and temples.

http://www.ezy.be/horses is the address of The Arabian Horse Worldwide Guide. This guide aims to promote the world's most beautiful and versatile horse — the Arabian.
http://intercoz.com/egypt is a 2,000-page magazine, published by the Ministry of Tourism, where all Egyptian tourist sites are listed and described.
http://www.datum.com.eg/~city is the address of the magazine *Cairo Scene*, Cairo's first on-line art and entertainment guide. It is the most up-to-date source on where to go and what to do in Cairo. It has also sections for books and the latest CD's besides proposed places to visit like Wadi Rayan.
http://wan.seas.virginia.edu/~aoa5v is the site of Exodus Egypt, a daily site covering home news including political, social and cultural events.

Sunny summer deals

Hotels and travel agencies are offering special prices for summer. Prices are valid for Egyptians and foreign residents

Travel agencies

New City Travel is offering trips to Paris, London, Damascus and Beirut. Trips to Paris go for LE1890 for 8 days including accommodation on breakfast basis. Another 15-day trip combines Paris and London for *LE3990 including* accommodation in three-star hotels including open buffet breakfast. A week trip to Damascus and Beirut costs LE2090. The price includes accommodation in four-star hotels on breakfast basis.

Hotels

Cairo
Pyramids Park Hotel, an Inter-Continental global partner resort, is offering a single room for LE160 and a double for LE180 including service fees and taxes. 20 per cent discount on all food items, free shuttle bus to city centre and free use of the exercise room. Prices are valid until October.
Sonesta Hotel Cairo is offering double rooms for LE220 and singles for LE200 including breakfast and taxes.

South Sinai
Sharm El-Sheikh
Sonesta Beach Resort Sharm El-Sheikh is offering a rate of LE260 for double rooms and LE190 for single rooms including breakfast, taxes and services.
Coral Bay Resort is offering a rate of LE120 per person for double rooms and is also offering a rate of LE700 for 7 nights including breakfast. Prices are valid until September.

Dahab
Novotel Dahab is offering a rate of LE200 per person for double rooms for three days including breakfast buffet. The offer is valid until September 1997.

Red Sea
Sonesta Beach Resort *Hurghada* is offering a rate of LE266 for double rooms and LE210 for singles on half-board basis including taxes and service *charge.*

Compiled by **Rehab Saad**

A goal too far

A golden goal from Shabab's Fouad Anwar destroyed Ismaili's dream of winning the Arab Club Winners Cup. **Inas Mazhar** reports on an eventful semifinal

A golden goal stopped local team Ismaili from making it to the final of this year's Arab Club Winners Cup. The Egyptians lost to Saudi Arabia's Shabab in a semifinal reckoned to be the most thrilling encounter in the 10-day event.

Ismaili had shone in their preliminary matches, topping their group with three victories — over Libya's Ahli, Belata of Palestine and Ittihad of Qatar. Shabab came to the semifinal having scored two wins — over Jordan's Wahadat and Arabi of Kuwait — and suffering defeat at the hands of Algeria's Mouloudia.

Fans were on the edge of their seats as both teams pulled out all the stops in search of a place in the final, but there was no score until Shabab's Salah El-Daoud kicked in a surprise goal in the last minute of the first half, silencing the cheers of the Ismaili fans.

The second half was a thrill a minute as Ismaili went on the attack in quest of the all-important equaliser. Things looked good for the Egyptians when Shebab's superstar Said Al-Ewairan was sent off by the Lebanese referee for hitting Ismaili's Reda Sika. With 10 men, surely it would be a matter of time before Ismaili scored and scored again.

But it was a mistake to underestimate the Saudis. Their defence was rock solid and they managed to protect their net until four minutes before the end of normal time when Ismaili's Abu Greisha scored with a header. The jubilant player removed his shirt and waved it around in celebration. What a mistake. This is strictly against the rules and Abu Greisha was already on a yellow card. The referee showed the red card and joy turned to misery as Abu Greisha left the pitch, leaving both sides with 10 men as they approached the match's nailbiting denouement — extra time with the golden goal rule, by which the first team to score a goal wins the match.

Obviously exhausted, Ismaili failed to maintain their attack and allowed Fouad Anwar to slip through their defence in only two minutes to score the golden goal and shatter Ismaili's dreams of winning the Cup.

Ismaili manager Angel Markos refused to blame the players for the defeat. He put the sad result down to injuries, which had affected the balance of the line-up. Both Ahmed Rezk and defender Hamza El-Gamal had been injured during the game, and while Rezk had been substituted, El-Gamal had continued to play while injured.

Markos conceded that Shabab had played a strong game and were generally the more experienced team. He added that Abu Greisha's red card had affected his team's performance.

Mario Guliano, manager of Shabab, said his team had won because they were simply the best and had followed his instructions to the letter.

Ismail Othman, Ismaili's president, also congratulated Shabab on their performance and victory. He, too, refused to blame the players, or the manager, for the result. In fact he praised Markos for his achievement in bringing the team this far, when he had been working with them for only two weeks.

"We will consider this championship as part of the team's training for the forthcoming league and cup," he said.

Although Ismaili's defeat was sad for Egypt, the competition was generally considered an organisational success. The only incident that marred the smooth running of the event was the row with Qatar's Ittihad team. The team accused Sheikh Othman El-Saad, secretary-general of the Arab Football Federation, of bias against the Qatari team. Ittihad withdrew after the head of the delegation and the team's administrative manager were banned from entry to the pitch for insulting the Saudi referee during the Ittihad-Ismaili match. Team star Moussa Nadwa was also banned from the pitch for bad behaviour.

Maged El-Khalify, head of the Ittihad delegation, said that Qatar would boycott all future Arab championships for as long as Othman El-Saad retained his position within the federation.

The secretary-general denied the allegations of bias. "The decisions we made with regard to the Ittihad team came after we had studied the referee's and observer's reports. We were simply following Arab federation regulations," he explained.

"Ahli of Libya took the place of Ittihad in the semifinal. This again is quite normal. When a team withdraws, the team that is next in line replaces them."

El-Saad commented that the Qataris had always participated fully in Arab championships, and that the federation would be happy to award them the organisation of future events.

"I don't think the Qatari football federation will really carry out its threat over a problem like this. There is no enmity between the Qatari federation and the Arab federation. We will remain a federation for all Arabs," he said.



Mortal combat: Mouloudia fight Shabab for possession during the Arab Club Winners Cup final

On the sidelines

THREE main players of Qatar's Ittihad are brothers. Amer, Ali and Rashed Al-Khabi, who used to play for different teams, joined Ittihad together. Fears of on-pitch family squabbles, officials say, are exaggerated.

THE FIRST lab for steroid testing is being established by the Arab Football Federation and is expected to be in place to serve the Arab tournament due to be held in Tunis on 18 November.

ALI Beshara, talented striker and captain of Libya's Ahli, is making his last appearance at the Arab Club Winners Cup. Beshara, 34, plans to start his own business.

TWO Ismaili players have caught "Ronaldomania". Magdi El-Sayed and Hamza El-Gamal have both shaved their heads and now look completely alike on the pitch, totally confounding friend and foe.

SAMIR Abdel-Raouf, 20, an Egyptian national, is playing professional football for Kuwait's Al-Arabi. Originally from Tanta, Abdel-Raouf's family emigrated to Kuwait long ago and he was raised there, but he dreams of playing for his home country. "My sole hope is to play for Egypt," he said.

ONE day before the semifinal, the players of Saudi Arabia's Shabab were sequestered. Mario Guliano, their coach, ordered them to stay in their rooms and relax ahead of their semifinal match with Egypt's Ismaili.

AFTER facing gastronomic difficulties in previous championships, Saudi Arabia's Shabab came to Ismailia equipped with a Saudi chef. They also brought heaps of rice and frozen sheep, ingredients of *kabsa*, a well-known Saudi dish. The high-cholesterol diet seems to work wonders for the Saudis.

THREE teams had to change their outfits due to the similarity of colours: Qatar's Ittihad when they faced Ismaili, Kuwait's Al-Arabi in their match against Jordan's Wahadat and Algeria's Mouloudia when they played Wahdat.

Clever play and good planning enabled Mouloudia of Algeria to beat back Saudi challengers Shabab in the Cup final, to win this championship for the first time in Algeria's history. **Abeer Anwar** recalls the match and speaks to the players that made the headlines in Ismailia; **Hossam Diab** captures a crucial moment on camera (above)

Mouloudia's revenge

Mouloudia of Algeria has won the eighth Arab Club Winners Cup with a 2-0 victory over Saudi Arabia's Shebab. It is the first time that an Algerian team has won this trophy.

The Algerians were lucky in having the support of the spectators, who had decided to back them in the hope of getting revenge against Shebab, who had put the home team, Ismaili, out of the championship in the semifinals.

This was the second time Mouloudia had played Shabab in the championship, having already beaten them 1-0 in the preliminary stages. Much of the credit for their success must be given to their new coach, Mahmoud Al-Hag.

Al-Hag, a Palestinian, was working in Germany for eight years and earned a PhD in football before taking up his appointment at Mouloudia. He made a careful study of Shebab, and under his directions the team managed to thwart the efforts of Shebab's most dangerous player, Fouad Anwar. Mouloudia played man-to-man and defended the goal at all times with the help of "saviour" goalkeeper, Ben Abdel-Salam. Al-Hag also managed to scupper Shebab's game plan by changing Mouloudia's formation. "In our four past matches, we played 3-5-2 and I predicted that Shebab would base their game plan on this. So I changed my plan and we played with 3-6-1," he explained.

Ben Zarka scored the first goal of the match after the first half hour of the first half. The second goal came from Ben Emara Sayed during injury time.

Mouloudia was formed in 1946. Since then they have won the national league and cup several times, and have also won Algeria's new Premier Cup. The team has also reached the quarterfinals of the African Winners Cup which is currently in progress, and have an important match to play next month.

Due to the political situation of Algeria, the team had little chance to prepare for the Cup. Their budget did not allow for any foreign training camps or international friendly matches. Coach Al-Hag arrived at Mouloudia just a month before the championship. Faced with this lack of resources, he divided the team into two groups, which played against each other in training.

In addition to taking home the trophy, Mouloudia won $50,000 in prize money, and the team's Omran Rashid was named the championship's best scorer, with a total of six goals.

Back in shape

WHEN Fouad Anwar scored the golden goal for his team in their semifinal match against Ismaili, he made sports history. The 2-1 match was the first in which the Arab Football Federation applied the golden goal rule, where the extra time ends once one of the teams scores. Two minutes into the extra time, Anwar did just that, and was immediately dubbed a golden star.

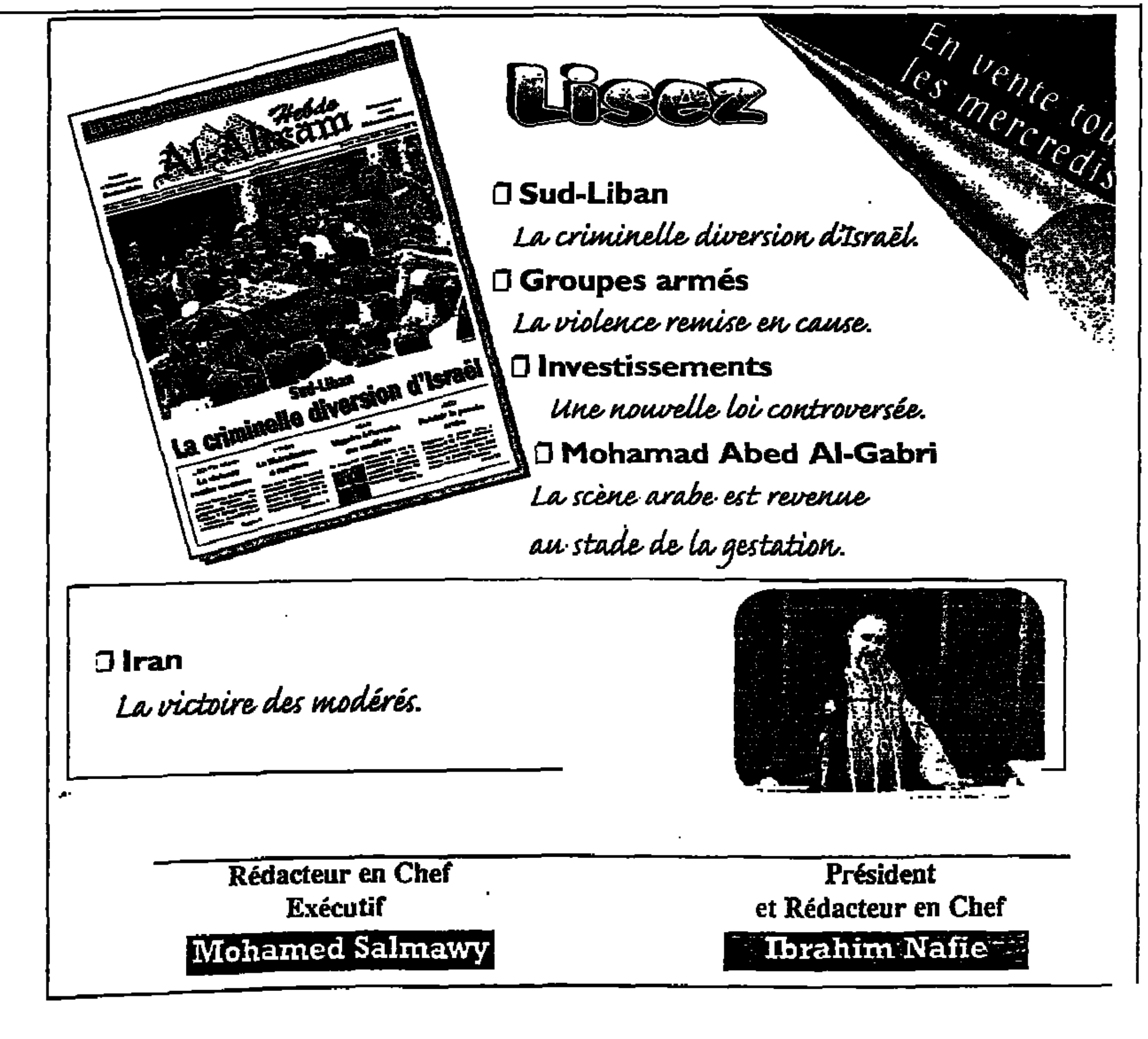
Fouad Anwar, 25, had a typical career. He started playing football in the streets and alleys, graduating to school leagues before joining Al-Shabab as a junior player.

His excellent performance in Al-Shabab's junior team led to his recruitment by the Saudi junior national and Olympic teams. Eventually he made it into the Saudi national team. His moment of glory came in the 1994 World Cup in the United States.

But making it to the top was easier than staying there, as Anwar was soon to learn. After the World Cup, his performance began to dip. "Like any player, I passed through a period of laziness, but, thank God, I'm back in shape," he said.

In the eighth Arab Winners Cup matches, Anwar found his form and rhythm. His golden goal against Ismaili gave him a timely boost. "It was the best goal of my life. This was a crucial match against a powerful team playing on their home ground." As to the prospects of his turning professional, Anwar seemed relaxed. He will think about it when he fully regains his form. Professional football is not allowed in Saudi Arabia.

Anwar won the title of best scorer in the 12th Cup Championship in the United Arab Emirates in 1993. He was named best Arab player in 1994 and was chosen one of the top 20 players in the world in the same year.



Goals galore

OMRAN Rashid, attacker for the Algerian club Mouloudia, has emerged as the competition's top goal scorer. Twenty-three-year old Rashid began his career at Al-Taragi Al-Mostaghanem after which he moved to Qostantina Youth, which won the Algerian league for the first time in 1996. He moved to Moulidia, one of Algeria's best teams, only 15 days before the Club Winners Cup and did not have the chance to play any matches before the Cup. His late arrival did not seem to affect his performance, however.

"I did not find any difficulty in playing with the team and mixing with my new teammates in such a short time," said Rashid. "Most of the players are my friends anyway, so I didn't feel like a stranger."



The presence of good professional teams like Al-Shabab of Saudi Arabia and Ismaili meant that the standard of play at the Cup was very high, he said. He added that Moulidia's placing in the group which included strong teams like Qatar's Ittihad, Saudi Arabia's Al-Shabab, and Kuwait's Al-Arabi, meant that he scored fewer goals than he might have done otherwise. "If my team had been in the first group I would have scored 10 goals and not only six," he said.

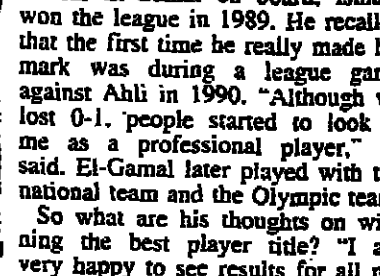
Where does Rashid hope to go from here? His ambition is to play professional football in Europe, and he is currently on the lookout for a good contract. In the meantime, he is very happy to have been named best scorer in his international debut. "I did not expect to win this title. I was trying to prove myself to my new team and I'm happy that I succeeded," he said.

Rashid's advice on how to become a good goal scorer is: "concentrate during the match and keep an eye on the goal all the time."

Simply the best

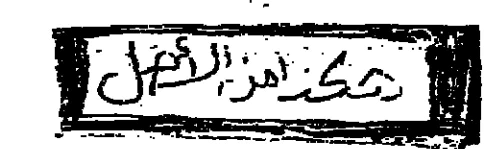
Ismaili's Hamza El-Gamal, 26, has been named best player in this year's Cup, a title he won for his exemplary behaviour on the field as well as his excellent performance. Known as 'Tyson' because of his heavy build and strength, which he undergoes special training to maintain, El-Gamal has been described as the 'saviour' of Ismaili. He is perhaps most noted for his skill in scuppering opponents' attack on the Ismaili net.

Hailing from a village in Menoufiya governorate, El-Gamal played street football with his friends as a child. At the age of 12, he heard that Shebin Club was giving tests for young players. He headed for the club, took the test and was immediately offered a place to train with the team. The outstanding youngster was offered a place on the junior national team at the age of 16, but was not able to continue with the national side. However, he performed so well at the age of 20 in a match between Shebin and Ismaili in 1988 that Ismaili offered him a place on their team.



With El-Gamal on board, Ismaili won the league in 1989. He recalled that the first time he really made his mark was during a league game against Ahli in 1990. "Although we lost 0-1, people started to look at me as a professional player," he said. El-Gamal later played with the national team and the Olympic team.

So what are his thoughts on winning the best player title? "I am very happy to see results for all my efforts. I trained hard and did my best in all the matches and I'm satisfied with the way I played even though we lost the Cup."







Young hope

With the Junior World Cup kicking off in Cairo on Thursday, Egyptian fans are looking to the under-17s to be the nation's soccer saviours. Nashwa Abdel-Tawab examines the rise of the 'Team of Hope' and reports on two pre-Cup friendly matches

It has sometimes seemed in recent times that the days when Egyptian football was a force to be reckoned with has passed into the realm of legend — tales to be passed down by an older generation which can actually remember a time when Egypt was ahead on the international football field.

But despite this reality, the fans never gave up. Time after time, before television screens throughout the country, hopes have been raised, only to be dashed again in a depressingly repetitive pattern.

But it seems that a glimmer of hope has appeared on the horizon in the shape of the under-17 team. The football-watching public first sat up and took notice when the team cruised to victory in the Junior World Cup qualifications. Here was a young Egyptian team, trained by Egyptians, that was *getting it right*. No foreign coaches on hugely inflated salaries here. What's more, as juniors, they have long careers ahead of them.

Post-qualification, the team returned quietly to Cairo to continue training under technical manager Mohamed Ali and coach Shawki Gharib. Under their tutelage, the team have played more than 40 matches, both official games and friendlies, and have begun to give some notable, strong performances. But behind all these matches was one major goal — victory in the Junior World Cup, to be hosted on home turf in Cairo.

The first arrivals from abroad for the Cup, which begins on Thursday, were the Bahraini team, who came two weeks early. Egypt and Bahrain have been drawn in different groups — Egypt in Group A and Bahrain in Group D — so they will not have the opportunity to meet in the competition unless both teams make it to the final stages. However the teams seized the opportunity to play two friendly matches.

The first friendly ended in a 1-2 defeat for the national team — a crashing disappointment for players and fans alike. Technical manager Mohamed Ali hastened to point out to a suddenly hostile press that this defeat was not the end of the world. He had, he said, been expecting a weak performance. After all, the players were especially tense because of the forthcoming cup and because they were playing at home. They were also afraid of injury, which could mean the loss of a place on the World Cup squad. Ali urged the Egyptian fans and press not to give up on the team, but to let them know that they could count on their support through the coming ordeal.

"The team are hurt to read that fans and experts are blaming them, saying that they are over-confident for young players at the beginning of their soccer careers," he told reporters.

The teams played again last Sunday and this time Egypt beat Bahrain 3-1, much to everyone's relief. Maisam Ahmed of Bahrain scored the first goal in the 37th minute of the first half. Egypt fought back to score three goals in the second half. The first was a header from Arabi El-Sayed in the 30th minute of the second half, followed by a 32nd minute kick by Hani Said. Then, in the 37th minute, Arabi El-Sayed scored the third goal when the ball bounced back into play from the Bahraini goalkeeper.

While the match ended with the desired result, there were yellow and red cards for both teams. Mohamed Ali is bound to take his players' behaviour into account when naming the World Cup team, which will probably lead to some delay in naming the squad.



Great expectations: the juniors strike out

A life of hockey

Gamal Fawzy, reputedly the best hockey player in Egypt and Africa, has retired from the Egyptian sports scene, but his contribution to the sport will continue, reports Eman Abdel-Moeti

Following a hockey career spanning two decades, Gamal Fawzy has put down the stick and pads. Fawzy's slick performance — he is considered one of the best short corner strikers in the world — earned him national and international acclaim and boosted the stature of the rather obscure game in Egypt. The national team's story, seven African championships while Fawzy was on the team, is one of resounding success. Fawzy also helped local team, Sharkiya, win 10 league titles and three Egyptian Cups. In 1993, he received the Republic's Order, first class, for athletic achievement.

From humble beginnings as a junior team player in Sharkiya, Fawzy went on to become an Egyptian hockey icon. Family and career considerations took him to Spain two years ago, where he played professional hockey for Barcelona and coached their junior and senior teams. His commitment to Spain is more than just athletic. He plans to live there permanently with Martha, his Spanish wife whom he met during the Barcelona Olympics of 1992, and their children.

Egyptian fans gave their hockey hero a fond farewell at the retirement match between Egypt and Barcelona on 18 August. And the show of skill was still there. Fawzi led the Egyptians to a 6-3 win over the Spaniards.

Hockey is Fawzy's life, and he plans to continue his successful coaching career in Spain. Fawzy coached the Egyptian junior team during 1986, an experience which came in handy when he took charge of Barcelona's junior and senior teams. "When they asked me to coach the team and play in it at the same time, I was scared. But I remembered my role model, Sharkiya coach Moby Zaghlul, and copied his firm approach with the players." Soon afterward, Fawzy gained everyone's confidence and respect and Barcelona advanced in the league standings.

Fawzy, who has taken up Spanish citizenship, says that his heart will always be with Sharkiya and the national team.

CAF Champions' League kicks off

The CAF Champions' League, with Zamalek flying the Egyptian flag, got under way last Friday. Eman Abdel-Moeti reports

The CAF Champions' League got off to a flying start on Friday with Egypt's Zamalek beating Mozambique's Ferroviario 2-1 in Group B in Cairo. Meanwhile in Group A, USMA of Algeria and Raja Casablanca of Morocco played to a 2-2 draw, while Premiero de Agosto of Angola scored a 2-1 victory over South Africa's Orlando Pirates on Saturday.

This is the first year that the league has been played by the round robin system. It is also the first time that the Confederation of African Football (CAF) has introduced prize money — totalling three million dollars. According to AFP, all the teams reaching the league stage have been given $150,000, with a further $450,000 to be distributed over the next four months depending on the number of points won. The two finalists will collect an additional $225,000 following the sale of television and advertising rights for the 24 matches to a television station and marketing firm in France.

Teams are playing in two groups in the preliminary stages. Group A consists of USMA of Algeria, Raja Casablanca of Morocco, Orlando Pirates of South Africa, and Premiero Agosto of Angola. In group B, Zamalek of Egypt is jostling for position with Ferroviario of Mozambique, Club Africain of Tunisia, and Obuasi Goldfields of Ghana. Zamalek were fortunate to be placed in group B because Tunisia's Club Africain represent the only real threat. In Group A, on the other hand, three out of the four sides — South Africa, Morocco, and Algeria — are very strong.

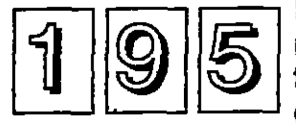
Zamalek's 2-1 victory over Ferroviario of Mozambique should have been a cause for rejoicing. But instead it provoked a controversy among the team's management, some of whom argued that Egypt had given a poor performance against a weak team — not a good omen for the rest of the championship. Others argued that Ferroviario should not be underestimated followng their surprise qualification by beating Cameroon's Unisport Bafang 4-0. Defending champions Zamalek have won the trophy on four previous occasions: 1984, 1986, 1993, and 1996. It goes without saying that they would love to take home trophy number five.

Angola's Primiero Agosto's victory over Orlando Pirates of South Africa with the same scoreline as the Zamalek win proves that Agosto may not be the weak side that some had imagined.

Tunisia's Club Africain were held to a drawbless draw by Obuasi Goldfields of Ghana in Group B on 24 August.

Next Friday, 5 September, USMA of Algeria will play Orlando Pirates of South Africa in Group A. In Group B, Ferroviario meets Ghana's Goldfields the following day. Then, on Sunday, Primiero Agosto of Angola will play Raja Casablanca of Morocco in Group A, and Zamalek faces their toughest opponents — Club Africain — in Group B.

Al-Ahram: A *Diwan* of contemporary life



Egypt was rocked on 10 February 1908 by news of the death of its 'young man', the name Egyptians had fondly given to one of their most popular nationalist leaders, Mustafa Kamel. A career lawyer-turned-politician, Kamel gained his popularity primarily because of his fierce campaign against British occupation of Egypt, which began in 1882. Kamel died at the age of 34, shortly after establishing the Nationalist Party. In a biographical tribute, *Al-Ahram* said he "combined the energy of the young with the dignity of the old." The newspaper's description of his funeral came close to what contemporary Egyptians saw on the day of Gamal Abdel-Nasser's funeral in 1970. Dr Yunan Labib Rizk tells the story from reports in *Al-Ahram*

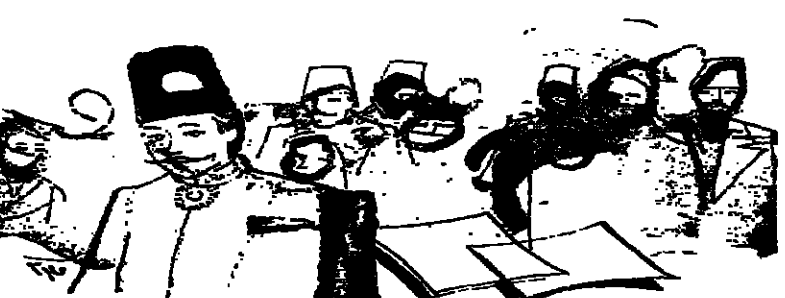


Illustration by: Makram Henein

AT 4pm on Monday, 10 February 1908, at the age of 34, the 'Young Man of Egypt', known for his many trips to Europe in defence of the nationalist cause, took his final voyage — this time to the world beyond. The 'Young Man of Egypt' was the epithet coined by Daoud Barakat, the editor of *Al-Ahram* at the time for Mustafa Kamel Pasha.

In all of modern Egypt's history, the calamity of the death of a political leader reached its greatest heights in three instances: Mustafa Kamel, Saad Zaghloul (1927) and Gamal Abdel-Nasser (1970). That Saad Zaghloul should have inspired such mass mourning was clearly understandable. He had been the leader of the greatest popular revolution in modern Egyptian history — the 1919 Revolution. He had reflected deep popular sentiments by remaining steadfast against colonialist intransigence which had him banished (1919), dismissed from the cabinet (1924) and shunted into the sidelines of political office as chairman of the Council of Deputies, the position he held at the end of his life.

One can easily comprehend popular sentiments at the death of Abdel-Nasser too. For over a decade and a half Abdel-Nasser was a nationalist leader of virtually legendary proportions. His momentous achievements in economic and social development and in bringing an independent Egypt to the forefront of international politics struck a profound chord in the popular heart. In spite of the defeat in the June 1967 war three years before his death, a defeat for which he admitted responsibility, the Egyptian masses were prepared to march behind him to confront the bleakness of catastrophe. When he died the people felt that all they had left was the abyss of despair.

Al-Ahram expressed the current national sentiment when it announced the death of Mustafa Kamel. The announcement said, "The final rasping in his throat was tantamount to an electric current that threw the entire country into a convulsive spasm, stunning the public as though death were a supernatural phenomenon."

The depth of popular mourning at the death of these three leaders was the same, in spite of the differing circumstances of their political careers. Mustafa Kamel was no more than a champion of Egyptian nationalism and the head of the Nationalist Party, which he had founded toward the end of his life. Zaghloul, by contrast, had a long political career. He had been minister of education, minister of justice and deputy chairman of the legislative society before World War I. After the war, he was the leader of the 1919 Revolution, the first prime minister to be elected to that post through the ballot box and finally the chairman of the Council of Deputies. As for Abdel-Nasser, he was the first Egyptian leader to occupy the centre stage of political power, power which he turned to the advantage of the national liberation movement and the advancement of social justice.

The general public is usually kept in the dark about the state of health of their national heroes. Only those closest to Abdel-Nasser were aware of his heart condition and the toll diabetes had taken on his health. The same applied to that young man with the resonant voice and tall and apparently robust stature who was still in his early thirties. Again, only those closest of Mustafa Kamel had known of the illness he suffered in the year before his death. Only they knew for example that, on 21 February 1907, he had written to Madame Juliette Adam, the French journalist with whom he had formed a very close attachment, saying: "I wonder if my health will permit me to summon the strength to undertake the tasks before me as I wish." Or that during his last trip to France in July that year he said to one of his friends, "I feel this illness has taken control over my life. I fear I may not live to see my efforts bear fruit." Certainly the public was unaware of how feeble he felt after delivering that powerful speech in Alexandria in which he announced the formation of the Nationalist Party in October 1907.

Biographers of Mustafa Kamel have noted that his newspaper, *Al-Liwa'*, continued to publish reassuring reports on the nationalist leader's health almost until the time of his death. The motive may have been, consciously or unconsciously, to stress how closely the nationalist movement was connected to the charismatic leader, as though its momentum were dependent upon the very existence of a single individual.

In announcing the news of Mustafa Kamel's death, *Al-Ahram* did not forget to remind its readers that the late nationalist leader's "first engagement on the battleground of pens" was on the pages of *Al-Ahram*. Thus, "if the newspaper mourns his passing as a colleague, it also mourns him as an ally and a brother in the struggle and a confederate in the battle of ideas."

Al-Ahram wrote: "Mustafa Kamel was outspoken in demanding rights for the Egyptian people. He expressed their deepest aspirations. He thus earned the admiration of all, even his adversaries, for no right-minded individual can blame a person for claiming what is rightly theirs. This is why Mustafa Kamel was revered by the entire nation and was dear to every civilised person who cherishes the rights of nations and loathes the enslavement of the people."

Al-Ahram was particularly intrigued by that astonishing blend of elderly wisdom and youthful ardour that characterised Mustafa Kamel. "He found himself summoned to a lofty and noble cause and in the pursuit of this cause it was one of his finest virtues that he combined the energy of the young with the dignity of the old in order to maintain the prestige of the status he had acquired."

The second page of *Al-Ahram*'s 11 February edition was devoted to a biography of the man: "Mustafa Kamel was born in Cairo on 14 August 1874. He received his elementary education in Umm Abbas School and then Al-Qurabiya School. After completing secondary education in the Khedival Secondary School, he studied law at the Royal Academy of Law in Cairo and obtained a degree in law from the College of Toulouse in France. It was in France that his political career began."

It was a memorable beginning. The newspaper continues. "In 1895, he appeared before the French parliament and displayed a picture representing Egypt chained in the fetters of the British occupation. He then displayed other pictures of all the nations which France had helped to gain independence. The pictures and the accompanying speech had a profound effect on his audience, many members of whom gave him considerable encouragement. Thus emboldened, he returned to Egypt and resumed his political oratory. It was his good fortune that God had endowed him with an eloquent tongue, an energetic mind and an impressive presence, all of which combined to enhance and spread his reputation."

Back in Egypt, Mustafa Kamel would continue to receive high praise, not least from the khedive himself at the beginning of his career. However, even more noteworthy was the encouragement he received from the Ottoman Sultan Abdel-Hamid. He became a pasha in his early twenties.

Mustafa Kamel had begun his career in journalism, as *Al-Ahram* had noted, while still a student of law. Within a few years after his return from France, he founded the nationalistic newspaper, *Al-Liwa'*. This newspaper began publication in 1900, and was the best known and the most widely circulated. He also founded three other newspapers. The first was a weekly called *Al-'Alum Al-Islami* (The Islamic World). The second and third, founded shortly before his death, were foreign language newspapers, *L'étandard* and *The Standard*.

Mustafa Kamel was a prolific scholar and writer. Among the works listed in *Al-Ahram*'s biography of him were: *Slavery Among the Romans*, a 20-page study published in 1893 examining how the institution of slavery in the Roman Empire differed from the concept of slavery in Islamic law; *The Conquest of Andalusia*, a novel published the following year that received broad acclaim; *The Eastern Question*, published in 1898 to commemorate the Ottoman victory in its war with Greece; and *The Rising Sun*, published in 1904 during the Russian-Japanese War.

Al-Ahram concluded its coverage that day by announcing the programme of the funeral ceremonies.

Reporting the funeral, *Al-Ahram* began: "By 3pm throngs of mourners filled Al-Dawawin Street and the home of the deceased was filled with prominent dignitaries and officials, pashas and *ulema*, school masters and army officers, village mayors and notables, merchants and writers. Every social segment and strata was present and all were crying and wailing."

Al-Liwa' wrote: "All the schools participated in escorting the dearly departed to his final resting place, with the staff and students of each school marching behind their own banner. The funeral cortege was at least 10 kilometres long and all participants crowded together in this sombre procession were shedding tears and uttering wails of grief. The students from the College of Law asked for the honour to carry the coffin of the deceased on their shoulders."

Sir Eldon Gorst, the British high commissioner, who sent a detailed account of the funeral to his superiors in London, wrote that the secondary school and higher academy students had collectively declared a day of mourning and refused to report to classes. They marched in Mustafa Kamel's funeral in organised files, four abreast. Notables and dignitaries walked in the advance of the cortege. They were followed by a throng of middle and lower middle class government officials and merchants, the latter having closed their shops for the day. A large stream of mourners also poured in from the neighbouring countryside, particularly from the villages of the Delta.

Al-Ahram wrote: "The coffin, draped in an Egyptian flag, emerged from the door of his house, causing the thousands present to emit a massive wail. The law school students bore the coffin on their shoulders and placed it on the bier which was draped in a banner bearing the name *Al-Liwa'*. It was impossible to maintain order in the procession due to the multitudes, who numbered in the tens of thousands. After the procession had marched for a short distance, it came to a stop to reorganise. The cortege was so long, the newspaper noted, that it brought trams to a halt for nearly two hours. Onlookers outnumbered the people in the procession. "Egypt has never seen a funeral procession such as that which occurred yesterday," the newspaper said.

Mustafa Kamel had been accused of promoting the notion of Pan-Islam to the detriment of Egyptian nationalism. The turnout at his funeral, however, proved otherwise. Indeed, *Al-Ahram* was keen to stress the heavy participation of Copts in the funeral, beginning with students from the Superior Coptic School who had also walked in the procession displaying their school banner wreathed in an emblem of mourning.

The tremor caused by the death of Mustafa Kamel did not end on the evening of his burial. An event of such magnitude was bound to have aftershocks. These were primarily manifested in the many commemorative ceremonies that were held over the course of the following days.

Also in the aftermath of the funeral, Ahmed Lutfi El-Sayyid called for the erection of a statue in honour of Mustafa Kamel. The first meeting of the committee formed for this purpose was held on 16 February. Their first order of business was to inaugurate a two-month-long public fundraising campaign for the statue.

Within a matter of days contributions already exceeded LE1,000 and the French sculptor, Savine, completed the statue in 1910. However, it was not set on its pedestal in the Mustafa Kamel school until 12 years later, and it was not until 1940 that it made its way to its present location in Mustafa Kamel Square.



The author is a professor of history and head of Al-Ahram History Studies Centre.

An overwhelming success for the first operation to float shares directly to the public by a private sector construction company

International coverage for shares of the Arabian International Construction Company



The Company has floated 1,500,000 shares at LE67 per share (LE100,500,000) as an increase in its issued capital directly to international and local organisations and individuals at a ratio of 31:77. The total number of requests was seven times over the floated amount.

About the company:

- Arabian International Construction Co. was founded in 1985 as an Egyptian joint-stock company in accordance with Law 159/1981.
- The company operates in the construction sector, specialising in civil engineering projects, resorts, utilities, public works projects and industrial projects.
- The company occupies a prominent place in the market, distinguished by its commitment to quality in offering its services. Projects are carried out according to the standards set forth by the ISO 9002, which the company was awarded in 1996.
- The company has now become one of the largest companies operating in the construction field based of the volume of work.

Floated shares to increase capital:

Number of shares: 1,500,000 Nominal value: LE5.00 Flotation rate: LE67.00 Total increase in capital: LE100,500,000

Purpose of increasing the capital:

- Financing the increased growth in the company's activities.
- Expanding the scope of the company's activities through ownership of other companies to complement Arabian International Construction Company. These companies will be chosen on the basis of the added value which the companies will bring to Arabian International Construction Company.

Important financial indicators for Arabian International Construction Co.

(all figures to the nearest thousand)

Future projections

	1994	1995	1996	31/5/1997	31/12/1997	31/12/1998	31/12/1999
Revenues	28.575	32.449	128.104	81.338	242.078	460.582	662.710
Net profit after taxes	528	168	3.545	5.978	23.677	37.224	52.729
EPS	5.028	0.34	1.77		6.76	10.64	15.07
Average profit growth per share					282%	57%	42%
Profit dividend P/E					9.9	6.30	4.45

Internal strengths:

- TQM and advanced management information systems for implementing a clear strategy to achieve both long- and short-term company goals, which enables it to evade and confront the continuous growth risks, and meet growth quotas in line with a definite strategy.
- The company has a highly developed human resources management system for developing its employees. The application of the 'incentive share' system in 1997, making it possible for employees to own shares in the company. followed the company's efforts to boost profits.
- The volume of work contracted by the company as of the beginning of 1997 was valued at LE675 million, while new contracts from January - May 1997 reached a total value of LE220 million. New contracts are expected to reach a total of LE1.3 billion.

The Arabian International Construction is therefore pleased to announce to its shareholders that, in order to facilitate the trading process of its shares on the Cairo and Alexandria stock exchanges, and to keep up with the latest developments in the securities market, the company has registered its shares in the central depository system of Misr for Clearing and Settlement Company.

Arabian International Construction Co. wishes to thank the Egyptian Stock Exchange Authority for its timely assistance and cooperation in this matter. Special thanks are also given to EFG-Hermes for its marketing efforts both within Egypt and abroad.

